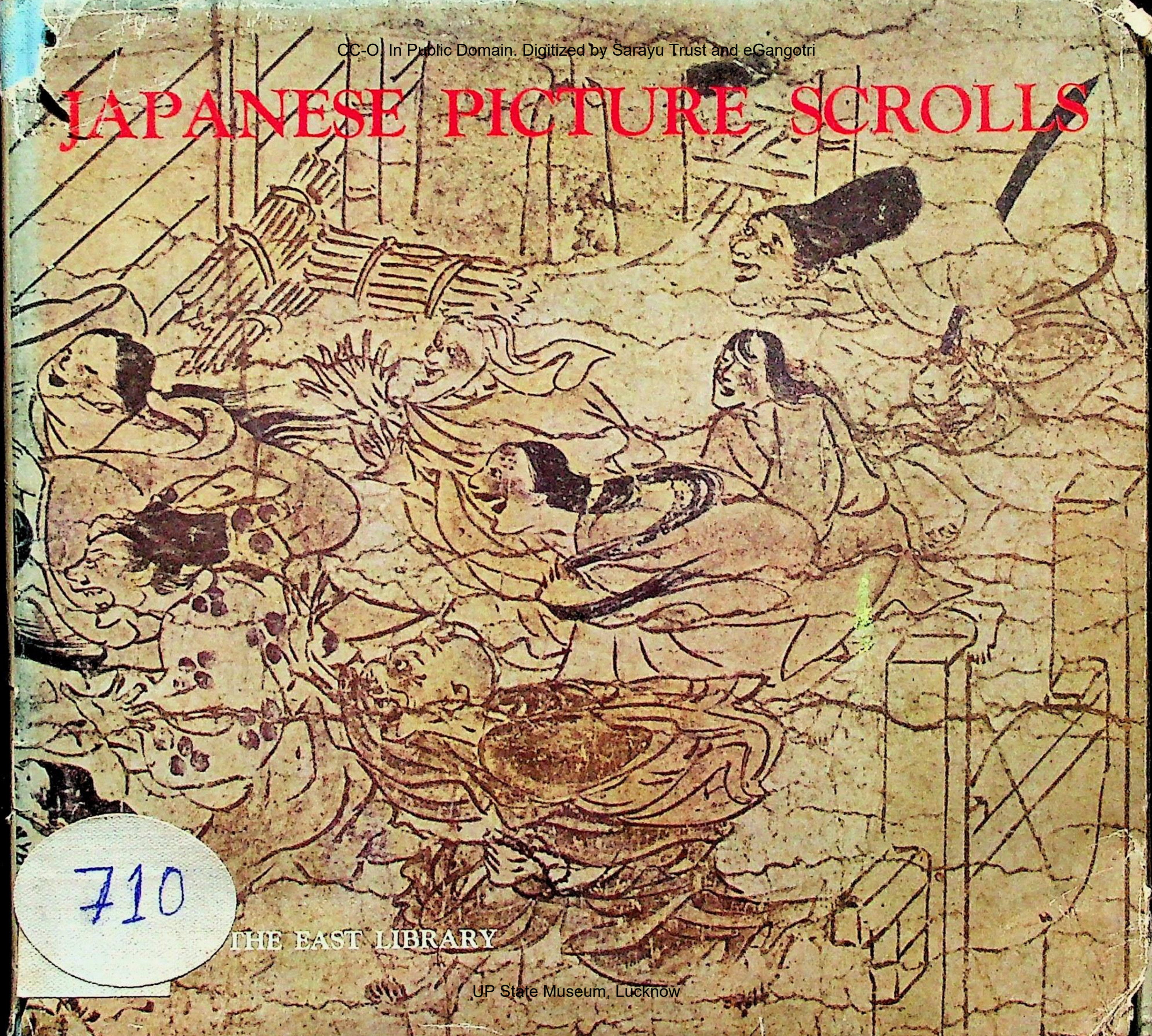
JAPANESE PICTURE SCROLLS



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JAPANESE PICTURE SCROLLS

JAPANESE PICTURE SCROLLS

by Elise Grilli

One of the earliest forms of the book is the scroll, as it was once known in Egypt and Rome, in China and Persia, and as it still survives in the Torah of the Jews. In Japan pictorial scrolls reached a height of artistry in the twelfth century and have never quite died out since; in fact, they may even experience another renaissance today. New interest is now directed to this ancient form of narrative painting, because of its affinity to the art of the film and its evocation of an illusion of movement through time and space.

Aside from historic considerations the Japanese "emaki-mono" are a delight to behold for the vivacity of their story content and the alternating naïveté and sophistication of their technique. The romantic and psychological novel of the "Tale of Genji," the biting satirical fables of the "Animal Caricatures," Dantesque scenes of hell, legends and miraculous tales and the sheer exuberance of the common folk, all these have found unique expression in this treasury of hundreds of schools which seem eternally fresh and stimulating.

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Japanese Picture Scrolls

by Elise Grilli

Japan seems to possess a special talent for preserving and continuing art forms that have long become extinct in other countries. This can be seen, for example, in the case of the ancient court music of *gagaku*, in architectural details, and in various arts associated with Zen Buddhism. It is also true of the method of writing and illustrating books in the form of long scrolls. This type of book, long considered archaic or extinct in most parts of the world, has in Japan also declined in popularity after its "golden age" during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but it has never been allowed to die out completely. Not only are hundreds of such scroll books meticulously preserved in national and private collections, but to this day some artists still try their hand at reproducing new forms of this very ancient art.

Scrolls of Lands Outside of Asia

Many other lands and continents have known the picture-scroll book since the earliest days of recorded writing. Egypt had its *Book of the Dead* written on strips of papyrus and rolled into scroll form. The *Joshua Roll* in the Vatican Library is perhaps the most complete work of writing and continuous illustration remaining from the Early Christian period. Long after the scroll form was abandoned in favor of the Roman type of book or *codex* the illustrations of the old scrolls continued to appear in mediaeval books. The *Book of Genesis* in Vienna and the *Bamberg Bible* contain paintings that are clearly sections divided from continuous band illustrations. More monumental arts also inherited narrative illustrations of earlier scrolls. It is to such an origin that we may trace the band of relief sculpture that winds along the column of Trajan, as well as the mosaics in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

Merely in passing must be mentioned illustrated scrolls of later years stemming from lands as far apart as Abyssinia and Mexico. The *Torah* of the Jews is, of course, a living example of a book in scroll form, although without any illustrations, according to the an-iconic tenets of that religion.

Painted Scrolls in China

In China the method of narrative illustration in the form of continuous bands has been in use since very ancient times, long antedating actual book scrolls. The love of motion early led to the depiction of hunting scenes and pageants in superposed bands on bronze vessels of the Late Chou Dynasty, on painted and carved walls in tombs of the second century A. D., and on pressed or painted tiles.

Real pictorial scrolls are known at least from the fifth century A. D. on, even though they have survived only through later copies or other transformations. The British Museum owns a famous scroll of *Admonitions of the Instructress to Court Ladies* by Ku K'ai-chih (c. 344–406 A.D.) which already exhibits compositional devices that were destined to have a long history. To this same painter is also attributed the original design for *The Nymph of the Lo River*, now known only through a twelfth century copy in the Freer Gallery, Washington.

As may be expected, the coming of Buddhism to China brought new narrative themes that reach back to India and Central Asia for their pictorial origins. The scrolls and model books that carried illustrations from Buddha's life and other pious stories have long been lost through the vicissitudes of time, yet their reflection is found on many wall paintings or bas-reliefs in Tun-huang and other cave temples. As typical of the scroll type of illustration, placed in continuous or superposed bands of narrative, one may cite the *Jataka* stories depicted on the walls of Cave 135 in Tun-huang, dating from the early sixth century. Here we can readily recognize an unwound scroll, with the same actors appearing in scene after scene, and with the painter groping for methods of depicting space, time, and transition.

If we generally think of Chinese picture scrolls in terms of the landscape paintings of the Sung and Yüan periods, it is only because these are so much more numerous than the figure subjects of earlier days. But outside of religious painting there must have existed a rich store of narrative scrolls with human figures, such as still remain in a few precious examples. We can only cite briefly the *Night Entertainment of Han Hsi-tsai* of the tenth century in the government collection in China. The Boston Museum is fortunate in having the *Portraits of the Emperors*, attributed to Yen Li-pen of the seventh century, *Ladies Preparing Silk* (early twelfth century), *Scholars Collating Classic Texts* (tenth–eleventh centuries), and finally the fully narrative unrolling of a tale of travel and adventure in *Lady Wen-chi's Captivity* (eleventh–twelfth centuries). A few additional works in Washington and elsewhere could be mentioned, but the above outline will suffice to show what Japan might have found and borrowed in China.

Development of Early Japanese Scrolls

In Japan we may see the beginnings of scroll painting in some scenes of the Tamamushi Shrine (early seventh century) and more clearly in the fragments of the *Sutra of Cause and Effect* (Kako Genzai Inga-kyo, Figure 3), probably a Nara Period copy of a Chinese work of the

Six Dynasties Period. The latter scroll arranged its illustrations as a continuous band above the running text in the lower portion, a system that was apparently copied for a while but soon abandoned by Japanese painters. The transformations of Chinese ideas proceeded slowly and cautiously as native Japanese themes and styles began to pull away from the venerated models of the continent of Asia.

The earliest Japanese scrolls that have survived stem from the twelfth century, but these show such mature development that they presuppose at least a century or more of tentative exploration. In fact, we may assume that the illustrated scrolls developed apace with the growth of Japanese literature and with the *kana* script in which the native poetry and prose expressed itself.

Long before we can see any narrative pictorial scrolls we learn of their existence through the literature itself. *The Tale of Genji*, written by Lady Murasaki during the opening years of the eleventh century, makes numerous references to earlier narrative and poetic scrolls with illustrations, notably to the *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (947–966) and to the *Ise Monogatari*. From the fullness of that wonderful *Tale of Genji* we also learn something of the manner in which these literary works were composed and illustrated. (See especially the "E-awase" chapter.)

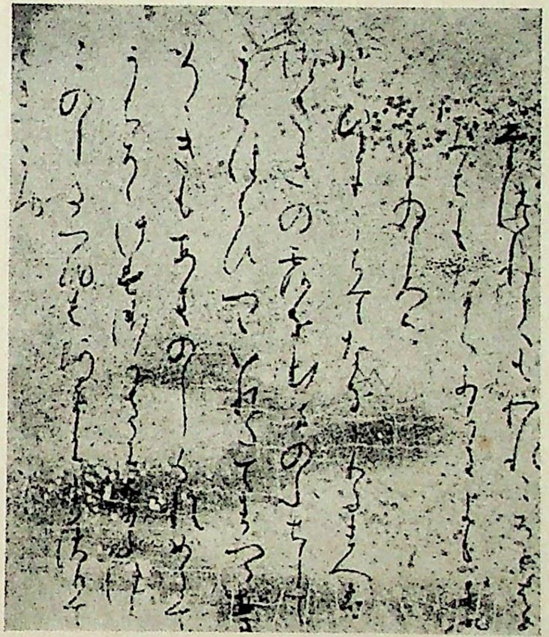


fig. 1 *Kana* Calligraphy of *The Tale of Genji*

In the leisurely and cultured world of the Fujiwara aristocracy, the writing of poems, love-letters, and diaries was apparently practiced by all who had the slightest intellectual aptitude. The quantity that has survived is enormous and the quality is often astonishingly high. Out of these intimate writings there developed a wider literature of the imagination, leading to the *katari* (or *-gatari* in combination), the recitations or improvisations by minstrels. Court ladies developed a special flair for poems and tales, for the elegant turn of a phrase that could be gracefully written in the fluid *kana* script. To the men was left a heavier and more pretentious literary genre, historical or learned, and written in the *kambun* or Chinese manner, with the Chinese ideograms. Also to the men fell the task of illustrative painting, especially the semi-professional manner of colored illustration, though a lady might, on occasion, attempt a highly refined ink painting, such as the *Makura no Soshi*.

This spinning of tales, autobiographical, historical, or entirely fanciful, is a pursuit so deeply cherished by the Japanese people that, once they obtained the easy system of *kana* writing, there was no halt to the steady outpourings of their fertile imagination. The popularity of the *monogatari* (literally, "discussions about things" of this world, in contrast to religious writing) expanded enormously when pictures were added to augment the written word. Finally even Buddhist priests dropped their reserve and began to utilize the ever-popular medium of illustrated scrolls as carriers for moralistic or historic-religious themes.

Since nearly all this literary material was native Japanese and closely associated with local scenes and personages, it called for the invention of pictorial forms that had no Chinese precedent. The times were also in key with such turning away from Chinese tutelage. The fall of the T'ang empire prompted the great statesman Sugawara Michizane to counsel a break in diplomatic relations with China in the year 894 A.D. Japan turned back to her own resources and for some two centuries concentrated on transforming into a native style some of the art and learning she had absorbed from her great continental tutor.

The development of the painted narrative scrolls is almost identical with the evolution of the *Yamato-e* style in painting. This is not the place to elucidate the exact significance of this much-abused phrase, except to stress that its original meaning referred to Japanese subject matter (or *Yamato*) and that the stylistic implication developed later out of the very differences imposed by non-Chinese landscape and by peculiarly Japanese customs and manners.

Time and Space in Japanese Pictorial Scrolls

Modern museums generally exhibit painted scrolls completely unrolled, in long showcases, at a comfortable height for the standing spectator. All this goes counter to the original intention of the illustrated scrolls.

Scrolls are books, not decorative paintings. They were meant to be "read" by a person seated on the floor near a low table on which the scroll rests and on which it is unrolled between the hands. It is not pedantic to emphasize this

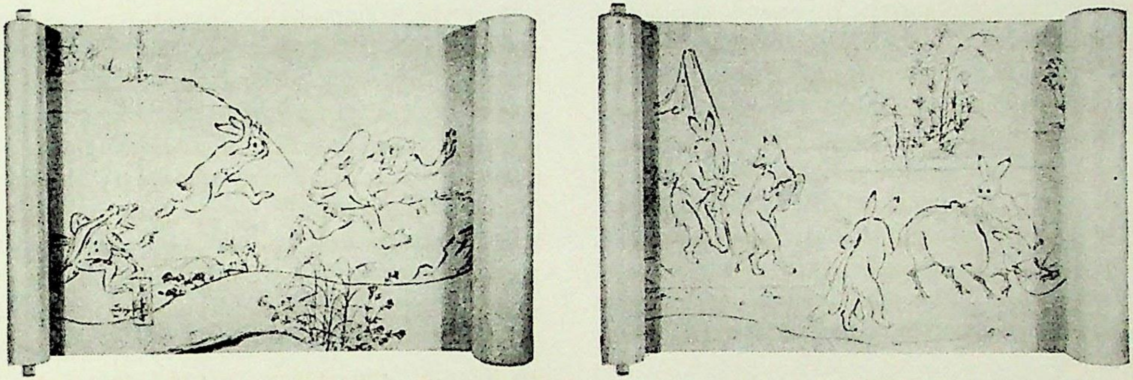


fig. 2 Scroll of Animal Caricatures

pose of the reader and this mode of unrolling, for this manner of viewing has conditioned the entire design of the scrolls.

Foremost are the considerations of time and space that enter into scroll design as distinct from other forms of painting.

Oriental scrolls, like the Chinese script, are to be read from right to left. When one begins to open a closed scroll, the right hand has the work of rolling up what the left hand unfurls and at no time is more of the design visible than can be easily held open between one's outstretched arms, or approximately 24 inches. The design thus begins at the right hand end, proceeds in sections that are imperceptibly linked to make easy transitions in the viewing, rises to a planned climax and dénouement, much as happens in a well-constructed drama, and then fades away to a quiet ending.

It takes time to unroll and to move along into the design. Time is also an important element in the planning and telling of the story, for in the long, unlimited format the narrative and the design can incorporate as much of the passage of time as is needed, and in whatever tempo is required. Perhaps better than our first comparison of an unfolding stage drama would be an analogy with cinematic structure, with its more flexible juggling of time, speed, and motion.

In the course of this evolution, the Japanese scroll painters have, in fact, made many discoveries in the arts of time and space, such as the Occident learned some seven hundred years later through the cinematic genius of D.W. Griffith and his followers. There are scrolls like the *Tale of Genji*, which are quiet and static like "still pictures" or posed tableaux.

Then there are extremely dynamic types, like the *Shigisan Engi* scrolls, which have clear examples of speed devices, of alternating long-shot and close-up, of repetition and transition, of shifting viewpoints (objective and subjective), of exaggeration, compression, even of montage. There are calculated climaxes, like the burning of Sanjo Palace in *Heiji* scrolls, that may well serve as textbooks of dramatic build-up, of tensions tightened to the utmost and then relaxed at the will of the painter.

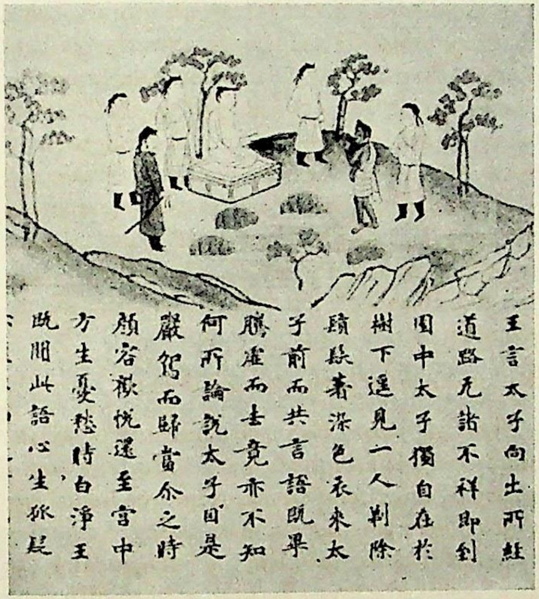
Just as important as the devices for the passage of time are those involved in the movement through space. Since the observer sits and looks down on the scroll, the usual viewpoint chosen is also a high angle or bird's-eye view, looking down and into the pictorial space. But there is a paradox in the fact that the actual pictorial space of a scroll is very restricted in height and almost endless in horizontal extension. Hence, all the clever solutions of steep diagonals to render perspective, of roofs removed to reveal the entire interior of a house (this convention is called *fuki-nuki yatai*), of inverted perspective to make the background loom larger, of sinuous curves of hills and rivers to lead the eye into simulated distances, of a variety of transitional tricks to lure the looker onward from scene to scene.

The best of the scroll designs are definitely in control of all these devices for heightening a sense of motion and for regulating the speed of time. Not all the scrolls have this control nor do they all need it. The *Genji* scrolls, standing near the beginning of *emaki* development, utilize the devices of space, but none of those for time. Time moves slowly through Lady Murasaki's novel and the illustrations in the scrolls provide a series of quiet, almost windless scenes, in which all sense of time is subordinated to the melancholy mood of the moment.

Relation of Pictures and Text

Through numerous experiments the emaki scrolls evolved various solutions for the interrelation of text and illustration; the following outline may sum up the main types:

1) *Parallel*...A band of illustration is placed above a band of text, and the two move along in step. This is an imported form that was abandoned early in the development of Japanese picture scrolls. Example: *Sutra of Cause and Effect*, seventh century. (Fig. 3)
2) *Alternating*...A section of text is followed by a section of painting placed after some specially memorable or visual scene. This is an early and basic Japanese type. Examples: *The Tale of Genji* (Plate 1); *Nezame Monogatari* (Plate 2)
3) *Occasional*...Text pieces are placed at



王言太子向出所住道路无諸不祥即到園中太子獨自在於樹下遥見一人剃除鬚髮著染色衣來太子前而共言語既畢騰虛而去竟亦不知何所論說太子曰是嚴駕而歸當尒之時顏容欣悅還至宮中方生憂愁時白淨王既聞此語心生狐疑

fig. 3 Sutra of Cause and Effect

the beginning or end of the scroll, while the main story is carried through a continuous pictorial unfolding which is almost self-explanatory.

Examples: *Shigisan Engi* (Pl. 3); *Ban Dainagon* (Pl. 4); *Animal Caricatures* (Pl. 24, 25)

4) *Interspersed* or "talking style", where captions or bits of conversation are placed above the speaker, as in modern cartoons.

Example: *Legends of Dojoji* (Pl. 26)

Of the above types, the second and third were found to be the most effective, for different literary demands of quiet introspection or of rushing adventure tales.

Subject Matter of the Pictorial Scrolls

The earliest illustrated scrolls were Buddhist sutras and other religious works, and a religious thread continues even when the secular material later predominates in popularity. The sutras confined their illustrations to a single painting, as a sort of title page at the beginning of each scroll, and to purely decorative touches throughout, as seen for example in the magnificent *Heike Nokyo* presented by the Taira family to the Itsukushima Shrine in the year 1164.

A large part of scroll illustration is given over to moralistic scenes of hells and ghosts, and to miraculous events associated with certain shrines or with saintly priests. To be sure, the strain for dramatic or picturesque effects often leads one to forget the pious intent of the tale and to revel in the adventures, the fantastic events, and the sheer blood-and-thunder quality of the dynamic design. In the biographies of great priests and in the legends of famous shrines there is usually a dominance of the specific and local elements, of the Japanese intimacy associated with *Yamato-e*, rather than any of the nobility and abstraction expected of a religious icon.

There is thus an easy transition from religious themes, imbued with secular elements, to the entirely secular subjects which form the bulk of the *monogatari* and *engi*, the literary and historic tales. This is the first time in Oriental art that painting begins to serve no other purpose than to entertain, to decorate, and to spin a tale concerned with the daily life of ordinary people. A remarkable degree of democratic spirit imbues some of these paintings. In Japan social stratification is often represented as a rigid pyramid, reaching down from a solitary emperor at the apex, through widening levels of aristocracy, priesthood, and warriors, to the farmers and merchants at the base. In periods of stress this structure was loosened and cracked. Such a moment occurred during the civil wars of the twelfth century, and again near the end of the thirteenth century, when the entire national strength was fused into repelling the Mongol invasion.

All social classes are pictured in the *emaki*. Emperors move in stately palanquins. The pomp and etiquette of court life is shown in the scrolls of *Annual Rites and Ceremonies* (Pl. 5). The amatory and poetic dalliance of the aristocracy is best seen in the *Genji* scrolls. The priesthood has its special category of the biographical tales and enters also into other themes, as the most flexible and mobile element in the strata. The *bushi* or warrior class occupies a lion's share during the Kamakura Period and armies seem ever on the move along the lengths of the scrolls. But most startling is the emergence of the common plebs as a subject for painting.

From the very start there seemed to have been a parallel development of aristocratic and plebeian themes. Almost exactly contemporary are the paintings of figures in stiff court costumes in *Genji* and the gusty rabble of *Shigisan*, not to mention the ribald fables of the *Animal Caricatures* which manage to mock all classes. All training and practice of painting, as far as we know, was in the hands of the educated classes; all the more remarkable, then, is the interest shown in the occupation and behavior of the most lowly creatures. The faces and gestures, the occupations and clothing of common people are observed with a sharp eye and are recorded with loving minutiae that transcend the bare need of story-telling. The painters seem to revel in the animation of the running and gaping manikins that bring a fresh vitality to arts which had known only gods and saints, sages and aristocrats. The villages and market places in the *Ippen Biography* were to become the forerunners of the streets and shops in the later *Ukiyo-e* pictures. In fact, the entire development of Japanese genre painting and woodcut prints is unthinkable without the groundwork laid by the pictorial scrolls.

The great range of subject matter will become clearer from the descriptive notes for the twenty-five works selected for the present book out of a compendium of hundreds—possibly thousands—of illustrated scrolls that have come down to our day. The emphasis in all the earlier scrolls is on humanity in action, rather than on the aspects of landscape and plant life that loom so large in other paintings of China and Japan. The pure landscape scrolls of Sung and Yüan did not exert their influence in Japan until the end of the fifteenth century, but landscape as background for human activities did gradually play a greater role. In the *Genji* paintings we are confronted mainly by interiors or bits of scenery seen close-up. The scene widens in *Shigisan* and grows still larger in the *Kitano Tenjin* scrolls. The *Ippen Biography* finally establishes an even balance between human figures and landscape and moves freely into far distances.

Painters and Calligraphers

Who painted the great accumulation of the illustrated scrolls? The quantity is so enormous and the quality so uneven that we may at once assume a wide distribution among professional and amateur painters.

The professional painters of the Late Heian Period were trained in veritable academies, called *edokoro*, attached to the court and to great temples. They produced work to order, as it was needed by their wealthy employers, and they followed in the footsteps of the Chinese painters who had come to Japan in the Nara Period. In the ecclesiastical studios attached to temples, some of the priests and monks who directed the enterprise also learned to paint and gradually formed a group of artists intermediate between professionals and amateurs.

Of these last mentioned amateurs we can learn a great deal through Lady Murasaki's *Tale of Genji*. The long idle days of the aristocrats welcomed various aesthetic pursuits, leading to highly refined appreciation and also to the practice of the arts. When belles-lettres admitted women as poets and romancers, their taste soon spread into the illustration of literature. Various techniques of painting evolved to meet their abilities, and these will be discussed in a later section.

If the painters were occasionally amateurs, the ranks of calligraphers were largely made up of non-professionals. The art of writing beautifully formed part of every educated person's equipment, as it still does even in modern Japan. The copying of sacred texts was regarded as a form of worship, so that we hear of a whole branch of the *Taira* family engaged in writing the beautiful *Itsukushima Sutras*.

Out of this mixed assembly of professional painters, priests, and aristocrats there emerged a few outstanding individual artists, like Fujiwara Nobuzane, to whom is then attributed an unlikely diversity and quantity of work. More reliable are the attributions to the many painters of the Tosa family, who became the representative carriers of the *Yamato-e* style down to its declining days in the sixteenth century.

Styles of Painting

Not only did period and personality affect the style of painting in the *emaki*, but the subject matter and its purpose also conditioned the manner of approach. We are dealing with an art that had such divergent destinations as religious works or as objects of pleasure in aristocratic circles. And above all, this art form involved a great range of talents and abilities, from amateurs to professionals, from priests to elegant courtiers.

Two main styles can be distinguished, on the basis of linear or painterly manner. Both have their roots in T'ang and Early Heian work and both evolved side by side. It might be supposed that ink line preceded pigments, but Japanese scholars are inclined to the opposite view, giving a slight edge of time to color-painting, and letting line drawing emerge as a reduction or simplification of the painterly approach.

Richly pigmented paintings on silk or paper appeared very early in China (fifth century) and were transferred to Japan soon after the spread of Buddhism. The *Sutra of Cause and Eeffct* (Fig. 3) and the paintings from Tun-huang reveal the great role which thick pigments played, sometimes with a fine linear contour and sometimes entirely without line. The latter style was called *mokkotsu* or "boneless".

In the *Genji* scrolls we find a faint ink line as under-drawing, covered with opaque pigment in a wide range of deep tones and strange color harmonies, and then again sharpened by a final outline or touching-up with linear accents. This process is called *tsukuri-e* or "built-up" picture. Considerable mystery still surrounds this mode of painting, which may have been devised by some directing mind at the planning stages and then passed on to aristocratic amateur painters for the "building-up" with colors. This theory was evoked by several examples in which the paint has flaked off to reveal not only the linear under-drawing but also written directives stating "field", "plants", etc. and giving color names.

To such a manner of painting in built-up layers and by different persons are also attributed the drastic simplifications in faces and hands, in just those parts of the human anatomy where amateurs would find the greatest difficulties. The mask-like faces have the barest indications of features in a convention that is called *hikime-kagihana* or "a line for the eye and a hook for the nose". These repetitious and unexpressive faces of the *Genji* aristocrats stand in sharp contrast to the animated shouting and almost grimacing faces of the common people in the *Shigisan* scrolls (cf. Pl. 21). Yet it would be rash to pronounce one as better or more artistic than the other. If it was really an inability of amateurs that has produced the mask-like faces, the artistic ensemble effect of the *Genji* paintings is yet perfectly in key with the melancholia and hush that pervade Lady Murasaki's romance.

The *Shigisan* scrolls constantly aim at drama, speed, and a folksy dynamic quality. They veer away from the static quality of *Genji* in technique as well as in design. The thick and opaque pigments are replaced by thin color washes that allow the line to show through and to dominate the design.

A third style, exemplified by *Kitano Tenjin*, *Ban Dainagon*, or the *Thirty-six Poets*, stands in an intermediate position between *Genji* and *Shigisan*. Some parts are painted with the heavy pigments of *tsukuri-e*, while in others the color is thin and the line grows free and dashing. Such a drifting and variety seems justified by variety of theme. This becomes the dominating style of most Kamakura Period scrolls.

The fourth style, called *haku-byo*, abandons color almost entirely and revels in the refinements of ink line and pattern. *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* uses all the conventions and devices of the *Genji* scrolls, but leaves out all color except the tiny touches of red in the lips. Was the sophisticated effect of black-and-white patterns intended from the start or was this a fortuitous result of incompleted work, recognized as possessing a strange beauty without benefit of color?

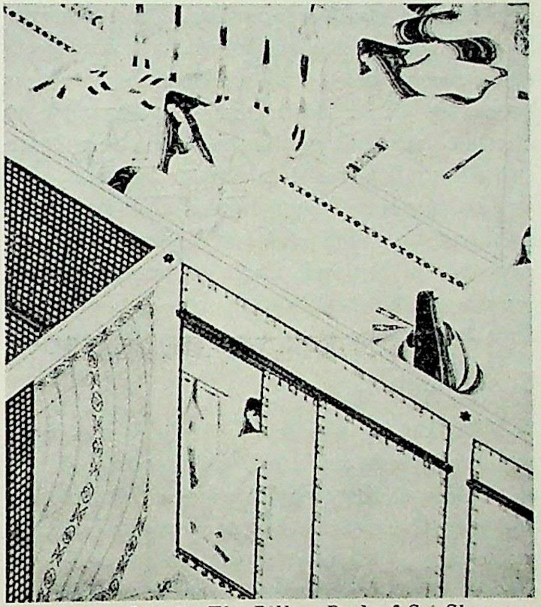


fig. 4 The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon

The superlative drawing line of the *Animal Caricatures* leaves no question about intention or procedure. Here the artist was no aesthete enamored with technique. He had something so compelling to say about the world and its inhabitants, his vision was so sharp and his mind so fertile, that the hand almost instinctively found the right way to record what the imagination so lavishly poured forth. Technique here follows idea with almost nonchalant ease.

Content and style became one. The observer tries in vain to stop and admire a suave line, a sharp accent, or a felicitous bit of detail—he is propelled along from one inventive note to another with the same natural ease that Aesop and Rabelais brought to similar material.

The sources of such linear brush style may be traced to a long series of esoteric Buddhist copy books, but only sheer genius can account for the unique sparkle of the best of the *Animal Scrolls.*

Conclusion

With twenty-five scrolls lightly examined, our survey here can hardly do more than sketch an outline of the great storehouse of pictorial and narrative wealth that Japan possesses in her *emakimono.* Our attention in these pages was focused primarily on the period when the pictorial scrolls grew to full stature and when they were at the most creative potency. The style of painting called *Yamato-e* developed most fully in the scrolls, to the point where Japan had for the first time a true art of her own, nurtured on Chinese sources, but with features and manners distinctly Japanese. Yet the development of this type of narrative painting did not end when its golden age declined.

The colorful *Yamato-e* painting grew senile as all arts and humans do. The Tosa school of painters continued to repeat formulas learned in a more vigorous age, but their work grew ever more pale and feeble. They were elbowed aside when Sung and Yüan China sent over a freshly stimulating art in the powerful ink paintings which the Zen monks and the Ashikaga shoguns imported so avidly. And still the *Yamato-e* scrolls would not die out completely.

During the Momoyama Period, at the end of the sixteenth century, when Chinese influence again grew weak, the native style asserted itself once more and the old scrolls formed the basis for a "renaissance" wrought by Koetsu and Sotatsu and continued by Korin. There were to be repeated "renaissance" movements later on and always the *Yamato-e* scrolls sparked the renovations.

Not many—or not enough—of these scrolls have found their way across the seas. But all persons who have ever touched a woodcut print of the *Ukiyo-e* school have come into contact with a belated echo of *emaki.* The paintings of local scenes and of lowly social strata that filled the Kamakura scrolls formed a strong precedent for the burghers of Edo who wanted their own life and times reflected in their arts. The artists of the *Ukiyo-e* print, from Moronobu to Harunobu and on to Hiroshige, recalled and utilized the space conventions and the color harmonies of the scrolls which were then still available in almost every wealthy household.

Neither the prints nor any other art form could quite dislodge the long picture scrolls. They assumed many different forms in different ages —landscape scrolls in the hands of Sesshu; poetic scrolls written by Koetsu and decorated by Sotatsu; changes of the seasons seen through flowers and grasses, as painted by Okyo; festivals and famous temples of Kyoto, as presented by the Sumiyoshi; printed wood-block accounts of occupations and customs of the Edo bourgeoisie ...and even a modern painter like Taikan or Seison will readily turn to a historic or scenic account in scroll form.

The continuing popularity of the *emaki* has probably as many reasons as there are scrolls. This rolling form can absorb all the interests and preoccupations of a people who love a well-told tale, but that can also express itself in visual images quite as readily as in words. The writing of diaries and the meticulous recording of events has been pursued with fanatic devotion throughout all centuries in Japan, and these factual records, too, could be illustrated by amateurs, by women, by priests, by emperors and feudal lords, by anyone who had enough talent to step across the thin line that separates the writing of pictorial ideograms from actual picture shapes.

Description of Plates

Plate 1. **The Tale of Genji**

Genji Monogatari Emaki
in Collection Tokugawa, Nagoya, and
Masuda, Tokyo.
End XII Century. National Treasure.
Color on Paper. Height 8.6 in. (21.62 cm); Length now cut and remounted.

Originally there probably were 54 scrolls to correspond to the chapters of the romantic novel by Lady Murasaki (cf. translation by Arthur Waley.) Only four scrolls have survived and these have now been cut and remounted for better preservation of the colors, which crumbled through frequent rolling and unrolling. At present, the painting sections and the text parts are separately mounted and each section is kept in its own frame.

15 sections of painting, 28 sections of narrative in Tokugawa Museum (Reimeikai), Nagoya.

4 sections of painting, 9 sections of narrative in Masuda Collection, Tokyo.

The extant sections of painting correspond to the following chapters of the novel:

Yomogiu; *Sekiya*; *Kashiwagi*; *Yokobue*; *Hashihime*; *Sawarabi*; *Yadorigi*; *Azumaya* (in Tokugawa Museum, Nagoya)

Suzumushi; *Yugiri*; *Minori* (in Masuda Collection, Tokyo)

The painting sections reveal several artists at work, although all keep to the same manner of "tsukuri-e" style. (See p. 10)

Traditionally the painting is attributed to Fujiwara Takayoshi, while the writing is divided among the following calligraphers: Jakuren, Fujiwara Ibo, and Fujiwara Masatsune.

More study has been devoted to this work than to any other scroll painting, with the resulting accumulation of full reproductions in photos and in colors, and with a very long and still expanding bibliography.

Plate 1 shows a scene from the *Yadorigi* chapter, the visit of Prince Nioi to his wife on a melancholy occasion, when the drooping autumn grasses in the garden seem to echo the rhythms of his lute playing.

Plate 2. **Nezame Tales**

Nezame Monogatari Emaki
in Collection Yamato Bunka Kan, Osaka.
End XII Century. National Treasure.
Height 10.1 in. (25.76 cm); Length 16 ft. 9 in. (508.18 cm) Color and gold foil on paper. 1 scroll.

The fragments now remaining of *Nezame Tales* are so close in style to the *Genji* scrolls that the same painter is assumed to have produced both works.

Only four sections of painting and four of narrative have survived and in so disjointed a fashion that we cannot determine the meaning of the scenes. The technique of painting with thick pigments is the same, *tsukuri-e*, as in the *Genji* scrolls, although a somewhat paler key is maintained. Also like *Genji* are the conventions of figure drawing and perspective, with perhaps a somewhat steeper angle in the diagonals.

Plate 3. **Legends of Mount Shigi**

Shigisan-Engi-Emaki
in Chogoson-ji, Nara.
End XII Century. National Treasure.
3 scrolls. Height 12.6 in. (31.52 cm); total length

of all 3 scrolls 118 ft. 8 in. (3561 cm) Color washes on paper.

If one work were to be chosen as most representative of the Yamato-e scrolls and as most influential on the future development of this entire genre, it would undoubtedly be the *Shigisan* story.

The painting style of this scroll is singularly suited in speed and expressiveness to the narrative material of this legend, which deals with the life and miracles of Priest Myoren, the founder of the temple of Bishamonten on Mt. Shigi.

Scroll I, "The Flying Storehouse", recounts the episode of Myoren's miraculous bowl (in Sanskrit, *patra*), which he sent through the air to a nearby village in order to obtain his daily sustenance. When the rich mayor of the village, through negligence or other cause, locked the bowl in the rice storage house, the entire warehouse rose up into the air and flew to the saint. After due apologies, it was made to return to its place.

The whole village runs out to witness and to marvel at this event, with gestures and facial expressions fully revealing their emotions. The painter takes advantage of every opportunity to show humanity in rapid action and in dramatic excitement. His fluid line virtually runs forward and the continuity of the scroll is able to unroll the drama with the facility of a modern adventure film.

Scrolls II and III are less violent on the whole and vary the tempo of action in various speeds. Here are developed other devices that recall film construction, namely the "close-up", the shifting point of view, and dramatic counter-movement.

With no definite proof, and merely on the basis of dramatic affinity, the *Shigisan* scrolls are sometimes attributed to the same artist as the *Scrolls of Animal Caricatures*.

Plate 4, 22, 23.

The Story of Ban Dainagon

in Collection Sakai, Tadahiro. Osaka.
Late XII Century. National Treasure.
3 scrolls. Color on paper. Height 12.6in. (31.52cm); total length of all 3 scrolls 89ft. (2672cm)

The text of this work is based on a historic event of the year 866 A.D., a political conspiracy in which an official called Ban Dainagon attempted to ensnare a minister, Minamoto-no-Makoto, by accusing him of setting fire to the Otenmon gate. Plot and counterplot unroll before us, with violence, arson, and surging humanity rising in a series of climaxes, until justice is able to triumph in the end.

As in the *Shigisan* scrolls, the continuity of the unrolling paper scrolls provides an ideal method of pictorial narration. The action shifts with ease from large groupings of massed humanity to a closer focus on a few key actors, and back again to the surging masses. The device of "continuous representation" allows a single figure to appear and reappear whenever the story demands it, sometimes even within the same scene. For example, on plate 24, in the scene of the quarreling children, the same angry father is seen rushing out of his house and also separating and kicking a child, all in one pictorial space.

A flexible and fluid line carries the action forward, creates figures and costumes with a few rapid strokes, overlaps to suggest foreshortening, and also has an intrinsic vitality in its interplay of accented or thin strokes. The line quality approaches that of the *Shigisan* and the *Animal Caricatures*, yet ample color is added, almost in the *tsukuri-e* manner of *Genji* scrolls. Thus the *Ban Dainagon* style of painting stands as an intermediate between the completely linear and the most colorful scroll types.

The painting is attributed to Tokiwa-no-Mitsunaga.

Plate 5. Annual Rites and Ceremonies

Nenju-gyoji
in Collection Tanaka, Chikayoshi.
Original, Late Heian. Copy of 1626.
Color on paper; some sections in black-and-white only. Height 12.7in. (31.81cm)

Originally there were said to have been 60 scrolls, made at the behest of Emperor Goshirakawa, but this original work was lost through fire. The present set contains only 17 scrolls of a copy made in 1626, by Sumiyoshi Gukei, and appears to be close to the original style, in the manner of *Ban Dainagon*.

As the title indicates, these scrolls recorded the sequence of ceremonies and festivities that occupied the court in Kyoto throughout the year. They actually served later on as a model for protocol at the imperial court.

The precision of recording has made this work a most valuable source for study of architecture, costume, and manners of the Late Heian Period.

Plate 6. Thirty-six Famous Poets

Sanju-roku Kasen Emaki
Formerly in Satake Collection; now scattered.
Kamakura Period. XIII Century.
Color on paper. Height 14.4in. (36.06cm)

The arrangement of this poetic anthology in scroll form opened with a small landscape painting showing the Sumiyoshi Shrine and then devoted one section to each poet, giving his portrait, a brief biography, and one selected poem. Each section is thus quite independent and has led to the cutting and dividing of this work among numerous museums and private collectors.

During the Kamakura Period portraiture was very popular and followed a style called *nise-e* or "likeness-picture", with an evident attempt to seize the essential characteristics of facial features in a few telling strokes. Pose and costume remained far more conventional and usually show the subject seated rather stiffly, all but submerged in the voluminous folds of costume.

Since the poets here represented belong to an age long before the day of the painter, we cannot expect this work to be literal portraiture from life, but rather the rendering of an image characteristic of each personality as known through tradition and also through his poems.

The attribution of the painting to Fujiwara Nobuzane merely names the most famous painter of the day, yet it may come close to the truth or at least throw an additional light on his style. This work has given rise to a long series of similar poet-portraits during the subsequent centuries.

Plate 7. Legends of the Kegon Sect

Kegon-engi Emaki
in Kozanji, Kyoto.
XII Century. National Treasure.
Color on paper. Height 12.6in. (31.51cm); Total length of 6 scrolls 273ft. 2in. (8195cm)

This pictorial biography (now in 6 scrolls) sets forth events in the lives of Gijyo and Gengyo, two Korean priests important in the early history of the Kegon Sect of Buddhism. According to temple tradition, the text was written by Priest Myokei (or Myoe), the founder of Kozanji, the same temple in which the scrolls have been kept to this day. The paintings, generally attributed to Fujiwara Nobuzane, the great painter of the day, have been shown through later research to stem more likely from the hand of Keinichibo Jonin, a close friend of Myokei. Thus the entire creation and preservation of this work remains close to the place and purpose of its origin.

The pictorial narrative carries the story forward almost entirely through the fluid line movement, with pale washes added for decorative effect, in the manner of the *Shigisan* scrolls. The continuous composition does not need more than bits of conversation or occasional explanation placed close to the actors, in a fashion somewhat similar to our modern cartoons.

Plate 7 is a section from the second scroll devoted to Priest Gijyo and shows him encountering the lovely Zenmyo, a Chinese lady dressed in costume of the T'ang Period. Here the dynamic line quality is seen at its best. Other volumes appear less refined in style and indicate that more than one painter was at work.

Plate 8. **Scroll of Diseases**

Yamai-no Soshi

in Collection Sekido, Akihiro and others.
XIII Century. National Treasure.
Color on paper. Height 10.4in. (26.06cm)

The original arrangement in scroll form had alternating sections of text and illustration. These have been cut and mounted so that each sheet consists of one picture and its text. Ten pieces are now extant.

The Kamakura Period, following after bloody civil wars, carried a spirit of disillusionment which readily accepted the philosophic confrontation of reality taught by early Buddhism. One popular theme dealt with the Six States of Existence, part of the wheel of life, with its recurring birth, sin, death and reincarnation. Out of this idea arose the series of pictorial scrolls dealing with various types of hell (Pl. 28), ghosts (Pl. 9), and diseases.

Plate 8 shows the curiosity aroused by an albino; this is one of the less revolting of the curious illnesses set forth in this scroll, which stops at nothing and is hardly to be recommended to squeamish people. The artistry of the painting and the evident sympathy with human woes achieve a philosophic acceptance of "things as they are" and lift the onlooker above elementary disgust or any inkling of vulgarity.

The painting is traditionally attributed (without any proof) to Mitsunaga, and the calligraphy to Jokuren.

Plate 9. **Scroll of Hungry Demons**

Gaki-Zoshi

1 scroll in National Museum, Tokyo
1 scroll in Cultural Properties Protection Commission.
End XII Century. National Treasure.
Color on paper. Height 10.9in. (27.27cm); total length of both scrolls 304ft.2in. (9251.5cm)

The imagination that produced these paintings and also those of the hell scenes (pl. 28) surely went far beyond the indications contained in the philosophic Buddhist sutras. The moralization sometimes passes over into a spirit of "diablerie" that is prevalent in all peoples and that often produces strange resemblances between Oriental devils and Gothic gargoyles.

The poor ghosts of this scroll have unappeasable hunger and thirst; with their scrawny bodies and bloated bellies they are the very incarnation of human misery. In plate 9 one such hungry demon has to undergo further tortures at the hands of hellish ogres with flaming swords.

The attributions of painter and calligrapher are the same as in No. 8, with no clearer justification. There are also several hands discernible in this work.

Plates 10 and 11. **The Life and Death of Sugawara-no-Michizane**

Kitano Tenjin Engi

in Kitano Tenma Shrine, Kyoto.
XIII Century. National Treasure.
Color on Paper. Height 20.6in. (51.52cm); Length of each scroll varies between 28ft. 2in. (844.85cm) and 40ft. 2in. (1204.85cm) 8 scrolls now extant.

There exist numerous pictorial scrolls devoted to the biography of Sugawara-no-Michizane, the great statesman and poet who lived in the latter half of the 9th century and who was later deified as a "Tenjin". His great services to his country, the nobility of his spirit, and the injustice of the slander and exile he had to suffer at the end of his life, all combine to make him a heroic figure and a favorite subject for the scroll painter's brush. The scrolls owned by the Kitano Shrine are believed to be the earliest extant version of this theme and are therefore known as "the original book" or "Kompon-engi".

This heroic theme called for a grandeur of painting, with brilliant colors and vigorous brush movement. Even the format is grand, with a width greater than that of any other scroll. The solidity of forms and the massive design are also unique among the Yamato-e scrolls.

Plate 10 shows Michizane praying on a mountain top. This scene sums up the fully developed Yamato style, with its blue-green hills often rendered directly in color without previous line drawing ("mokkotsu" or "boneless painting") and with the flexible use of perspective that allows the central figure to loom large and high, with less important segments of the scene shown smaller in scale. This approach to figure and landscape exerted a continuous influence on later Japanese painting, down to our day.

The attribution of the painting to Fujiwara Nobuzane, the leading painter of the period, is now seriously questioned; further study may yet reveal some unknown Buddhist painter as a more likely author of this work.

Plate 12. **Tales of the Heiji Wars**

Heiji Monogatari

1 scroll in Boston Museum.
1 scroll in National Museum, Tokyo.
1 scroll in Seikado Foundation, Tokyo.
Middle XIII Century.
Color on paper. Height 16.5in. (41.21cm) to 17in. (42.42cm); Lengths: 23ft. 3in. (698.42cm); 32ft. 9in. (984.24cm); 31ft. 10in. (956.97cm)

The three scrolls now remaining probably are but a fragment of a far more extensive pictorial version of the Hogen and Heiji Wars, the bloody struggle to the death between the rival military families of Taira (or Heike) and Minamoto (or Genji), that lasted from 1156 until the final triumph of Minamoto-no-Yoritomo in 1185.

Short of actually moving forms as in the cinema, one can hardly conceive of a more dynamic art than these scenes of wars, of pillage, and of masses of humanity in agitated movement. The Boston scroll recounts the burning of Sanjo Palace with all the excitement, climax, and final hiatus that a most perceptive dramatic sense would bring to such a theme. At this moment in the golden age of emaki-painting the artist's line and color were fully able to cope with the intricacies of surging motion, of animals in frenzy, and of infinitely varied human reactions to the drama of fire, war, and death.

The third scroll may stem from the same hand as the first, although it is less agitated and deals with the emperor's visit to the Rokuhara mansion of the

Tairas. The second scroll deals with the death of Shinzei and shows some stylistic departures from the other two scrolls. The painting is usually attributed to Sumiyoshi Gukei.

Plate 13.

Pictorial Biography of Priest Honen

Honen Shonin Eden
In Chion-in, Kyoto. .
Early XIV Century. National Treasure.
Color on paper. Height 13in. (32.73cm); Length, total for 48 scrolls, 1737ft. 5in. (521m 20cm)

High Priest Honen, the founder of the Jodo sect, was so revered even in his lifetime that one of the most ambitious biographical enterprises has been devoted to him. At the behest of Emperor Gofushimi, the best calligraphers and several members of the royal family embarked on a detailed account of the activities of the great priest and his disciples, with no less than 48 scrolls to tell the story.

The painting was entrusted to Tosa Yoshimitsu and eight other painters, who are said to have labored for ten years. Several styles are discernible, but there is no clear identification of the artists and their share. Presumably one of the professional Tosa painters supervised the entire work and maintained a certain unity throughout.

The care and the reverence brought to this task resulted in a consistently high level of finesse in color and brush-work, but inspiration must have been flagging before the large undertaking progressed very far. There is an inescapable monotony and repetitiousness in the static scenes of the good priest sitting in his room, giving out pious discourse to his attentive listeners. Also the conventions of scroll composition had by now hardened into veritable clichés.

Our Plate 13 comes from the ninth scroll and shows a reception and the "Ennen Dance" staged for the Emperor Goshirakawa, in honor of one of his visits to the Enryakuji on Mount Hiei.

Plate 14.

Pictorial Biography of Priest Ippen

Ippen Shonin Eden
5 scrolls in Kankiko-ji, Kyoto.
7 scrolls in National Museum, Tokyo.
End of the XIII Century. National Treasure.
Color washes on silk. Height 15.3in. (38.18cm); Length per scroll varies from 30ft. 7in. (922.12cm) to 36ft. 5in. (1091.21cm)

An inscription at the end of the last scroll dates this work 1299 (or Shoan 1), which means that it was painted close to the lifetime of Priest Ippen (1239-1289), the impassioned Amidist preacher and founder of the Ji sect.

Such proximity might have resulted in a work of harsh realism, if the dictates of Kamakura taste alone had been at work; instead there is a remarkable nature poetry, partly Yamato-e and partly Sung and Yuan in inspiration. While most of the Japanese scrolls excel in scenes of dramatic action and human emotionalism, this work is predominantly a landscape scroll. The travels of Priest Ippen allowed the painter to follow his wanderings through all the byways of Japan, with the landscape taking a lion's share and the figures kept proportionately small. Even Mount Fuji here finds one of its early representations.

Note that the painting is on silk, while most of the other scrolls are on paper. A delicate thin line carries the narrative forward and the pale washes of color add an atmospheric quality.

The painter is named Eni and is otherwise unknown. The text was written by Shikai, a direct disciple of Ippen and founder of the temple in which the work has remained to this day.

Five other versions of this biography are in existence, but do not measure up to this original work.

Plate 14, taken from scroll 4, shows Priest Ippen teaching a son of the priest of the Kibitsu-no-miya Shrine.

Plate 15. **Pictorial Record of the Mongol Invasion**

Moko Shurai Ekotoba

In Collection of Imperial Household.
End XIII Century.
2 scrolls. Color on paper. Height 15.8in. (39.39cm); Length, total for both scrolls 181ft. 2in. (54m. 30.54cm)

Many gaps and confusions in the arrangement indicate that the two extant scrolls are a fragment of a larger work. According to tradition, the warrior Takezaki Suenaga (of Higo Province) had fought with distinction in several battles during the Mongol attack and then had this scroll painted to commemorate his valor. This would date the work at the end of the XIIIth Century.

The battle scenes on land and sea are rendered with evident military zest and with a sharp eye for accuracy in details of armor and weapons. Individual bravery is duly noted by names and other indications written above the participating heroes. The whole work betokens the interest of the "bushi" or warrior class in scroll painting as a valuable record of personal achievement and as a lively narration of campaign and strategy.

The technique of painting is not highly skilled, even though the work is attributed to Tosa Nagatake or Nagaaki. The heavy line lacks fluidity and piles up masses of soldiers instead of moving them rapidly into battle. Yet the lively color compensates somewhat for the stolidity of line and creates the proper sparkle and staccato of military gesture.

Plate 16. **Miracles of Kasuga Gongen**

Kasuga Gongen Reikenki

In Collection of Imperial Household
(formerly in Kasuga Shrine, Nara).
Dated by Inscription 1309.
20 scrolls. Color on silk. Height 16.5in. (41.21cm); Length per scroll varies from 22ft. 6in. (671cm) to 41ft. 6in. (1246. 67cm)

This set of scrolls is endowed with the most complete documentation and dating and may be considered as representative of the highly developed Yamato-e style in scroll painting.

An inscription states that the scrolls were made in the year 1309 at the behest of the Sadaijin (Minister of the Left) Saionji Kimihira and donated to his family shrine of Kasuga. The painter named is Takashina-no-Takakane, and four calligraphers were engaged in the task of writing the twenty scrolls. The whole work is evidently pious in intention and official in presentation, with all the virtues and defects implicit in such origin.

The theme deals with the miracles of Kasuga Gongen, the divinity of the famous Shinto shrine in Nara. The divinity frequently manifests himself through oracles and dreams and appears before his devout worshippers in and around the shrine, provided certain formal offerings and ceremonies are performed. There seems to be no more impulsiveness or spontaneity in the god than there is in the painting.

The pace at which the story unrolls is formal and slow, proceeding with the dignity behoving aristocrats come to worship at an official shrine. The painting style is perfectly in key with this formality—rich in color, precise in detail, clear and elegant in composition. All the knowledge gained in two centuries of Yamato-e development is amply poured into this work so that almost any section may be regarded as a full summary of the conventions, customs, local color, and normal of life of its time.

Plate 17. **Legends of Ishiyama Temple**

Ishiyama-dera Engi
in Ishiyama-dera, Shiga Prefecture.
XIV, XV, and XIX Centuries.
7 scrolls. Color on paper. Height 13.5 in. (33.64cm); Length varies from 44ft. 8in. (1342.42cm) to 62ft. 4in. (1869.69cm.)

The 33 sections into which the 7 scrolls are divided are intended to conform to the 33 different aspects of Nyorin Kannon, the patron saint of the Ishiyama Temple and the divinity to whom are attributed the many miracles associated with that location.

The theme is historic, as well as miraculous, and gives an account of the founding of the temple by Priest Ryoben, through a land donation by Emperor Daigo in the year 1308 (Bunpo 2). This date affords a "terminus post quem" for the creation of the scrolls, but complications are provided by later additions and reworkings.

Actually four different styles of painting may be distinguished. Scrolls 1, 2, and part of 3 are in true Yamato-e style, with a free drawing line and heavy, but harmonious coloring. These scrolls bear a resemblance to "Kasuga Gongen" and are attributed to the same painter, Takashina Takakane. Scroll 4 does not quite measure up in quality and is believed to be a later work by Tosa Mitsunobu of the 15th century. Scroll 5 is close in time to scroll 4, but the painter here was Awataguchi Takamitsu. Scrolls 6 and 7, in the last group, are definitely a later replacement, painted by Tani Buncho in the 19th century, at the request of Matsudaira Rakuo.

Plate 17 brings a scene from Scroll 5 (attrib. to Awataguchi Takamitsu) and illustrates the story of a man who had lost an imperial letter and recovered it miraculously when he cut open a fish he had caught.

Plate 18. **The Story of Obusama Saburo**

Obusama Saburo Ekotoba
in Collection Asano, Nagatake. Tokyo.
End XIII Century.
One scroll. Color on paper. Height 8in. (20.09cm); Length 42ft. (1260.9cm)

The single remaining scroll of this story is evidently a fragment of a longer tale, which involved three brothers, all warriors, who lived in the Kanto district. Saburo, the third brother, was cruel to his orphaned niece, until the girl was saved by the intervention of Kannon.

The interest of this scroll resides in the insight it affords into the life of "bushi" or local warriors, their ideals, their armor, and their way of life. In painting technique this work is not highly skilled, yet moves along with a slender line and pale colors that are well suited to the somewhat naive and provincial flavor.

The resemblance to the style of "Ise Shin Meisho Utagassen" has led to an attribution to the same painter, Tosa-no-Takasuke or Takanori, who was active. c. 1295.

Plate 19. **The Story of a Painter**

Eshi-Zoshi
in the Imperial Collection.
XIV Century.
One scroll. Color on paper. Height 12in. (30cm); length 26ft. 4in. (790.3cm)

The life of a poor artist during the Kamakura

Period, if not "Bohème" by modern standards, was certainly similar in its economic straits. The painter of this story had a joyful moment when he received the news of his appointment to an office as a court painter and he promptly arranged a feast in celebration. But financial remuneration was not forthcoming; he was robbed; and finally he could not even manage to pay the taxes.

In his dire poverty he apprenticed his son as a novice in a Shingon temple and he himself became a devout Buddhist.

This tale has been held to be autobiographical and by the hand of no less a painter than Fujiwara Nobuzane. It were, indeed, sad if the leading painter of his day were no better rewarded for his art.

Actually the style is considerably different from Nobuzane's and seems to stem from a later period than his date. The line is thick and heavy, the faces and poses verging on caricature, yet with a folksy humor and realistic strength.

Plate 20. **The Legend of Chigo Kannon**

Chigo Kannon Engi

Collection Iwami, Toshio.

XIV Century.

One scroll. Color on paper. Height 20. 6in. (51.52 cm); Length 32ft. 9in. (984.09cm)

The narrative, attributed to one Tsunetomo, deals with the miracles wrought by the statue of the eleven-headed Kannon of the Bodai-in, Kofukuji, in Nara.

The painting of this scroll is orthodox Yamato-e, good, but uninspired, moving along in a well-established tradition. In its gentle brush quality and lively coloring it sums up the standard and utilitarian practice of scroll painting for dogmatic purposes. Yet, if this be considered the humdrum average of this art, it still maintains a charm and a clarity of pictorial narrative that continue to fascinate the modern observer.

The painting has been attributed to Tosa Yoshimitsu.

Plates 24, 25.

Scroll of Animal Caricatures

Choju-Giga

in Kozanji, Kyoto.

Late XII-Early XIII Centuries. National Treasure.

4 scrolls. Ink on paper. Height varies from 12.2in. (30.61cm) to 12.7in. (31.81cm) Length varies from 31ft. 2in. (933.33cm) to 39ft. 7in. (1189.01cm)

Ink line alone, unadorned by tonal shadings or bright colors, can hardly be carried to finer artistry than it attains in the best of the four scrolls in the Kozanji in Kyoto. However, only the first two scrolls deserve such praise and these are the ones generally attributed (without much substantiation) to Abbot Toba Sojo (1053—1140), a colorful priest-nobleman-painter who is mentioned in several literary works of the time. The third and fourth scrolls are inferior in quality and show elements of a later period.

It remains problematic how so easy and fluid a line quality could have emerged so early in the development of scroll painting. Its antecedents may have evolved through the ink drawings in the copy books of the esoteric Buddhist sects, where drawings were used as purely iconographic directives, dogmatic and repetitious, yet in some hands they achieved a variety and strength that went beyond actual need and passed over into fine line per se. As an example one might cite the "Fudo-Myoo", by Shinkai, in the Daigoji in Kyoto.

The pleasure of examining the animal caricatures is apt to make us forget questions of dating and attribution. The first two scrolls, especially, are pure delight in their exuberance, humor, and sly satire, all propelled forward by the undulating and finely accented line. The frollicking animals are impersonating human beings with the intent of satirizing their foibles. They do not stop short of sacrilege in deriding Buddhist clerics, in retaliation, no doubt, for oppression meted out by the arrogant and militant monks of a corrupt age. But the monkeys, frogs, and rabbits, who, on Plates 24—25, are lampooning pompous priests, are just as ready to turn against decadent aristocrats and strutting soldiers.

The finesse found in the line is also carried over into composition, with easy transitions from scene to scene, and without interruptions of the text.

Plate 26. **Legends of Dojoji**

Dojoji Engi
in Dojoji, Wakayama.
Mid XVI Century.
2 scrolls. Color on paper. Height 12.6in. (31.52cm); Length, total for both scrolls 69ft. 7in. (2088.49 cm)

The story pictured in these scrolls has been a favorite theme in poetry and in the Noh and Kabuki drama. It tells of the unhappy woman who loved a young priest, pursued him in vain, and literally burned him with her passion when he hid himself under a large bell of the Dojoji. The prayers of exorcism by the priests of this temple finally soothed all passions and turned both lovers into heavenly beings.

Even so dramatic a story could not animate the painters of the late Muromachi Period, when the art of scroll painting had run into decline. The puppet-like figures are childish impersonations, rather than real actors. They amble loosely across the spreading space, without the pictorial propulsion of earlier scroll paintings. In cartoon fashion they speak their lines in writing placed above their heads, in an attempt to intensify their expressive power.

An unreliable attribution gives the painting to Tosa Mitsushige, even though the work does not carry any elements of the orthodox Tosa style.

Plate 27.

One Hundred Goblins of the Night

Hyakki Yako Emaki
Daitokuji, Shinju-an, Kyoto.
XVI Century.
One Scroll. Color on paper. Height 13.2in. (33.03 cm); Length 24ft. 10in. (746.01cm)

Stories of ghosts and fierce demons were always part of Japanese folk lore. At the end of the Muromachi Period, when more pious legends had lost their hold on the popular imagination, this macabre element also invaded the narrative picture scrolls.

In the present scroll the goblins are amusing, rather than threatening. They are fantastic apparitions of the night, materializations of a lively imagination that feeds on the incongruous and "surrealistic" elements of diablerie. Somewhat reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch are the animated objects which in the daytime perform the prosaic functions of shoes, bowls, kettles, or musical instruments, but whom darkness can turn into spooks and goblins. At the end of the scroll, the rising sun again sends them scurrying back to reality.

No narrative text accompanies this scroll and none is really needed. A flexible line and lively coloring carry the story along and are well matched to the lovable, childish, *Alice in Wonderland* sort of mood of this work. The scroll remains anonymous, as befits this playful end of a long and serious art form.

Plate 28. **Scroll of Hells**

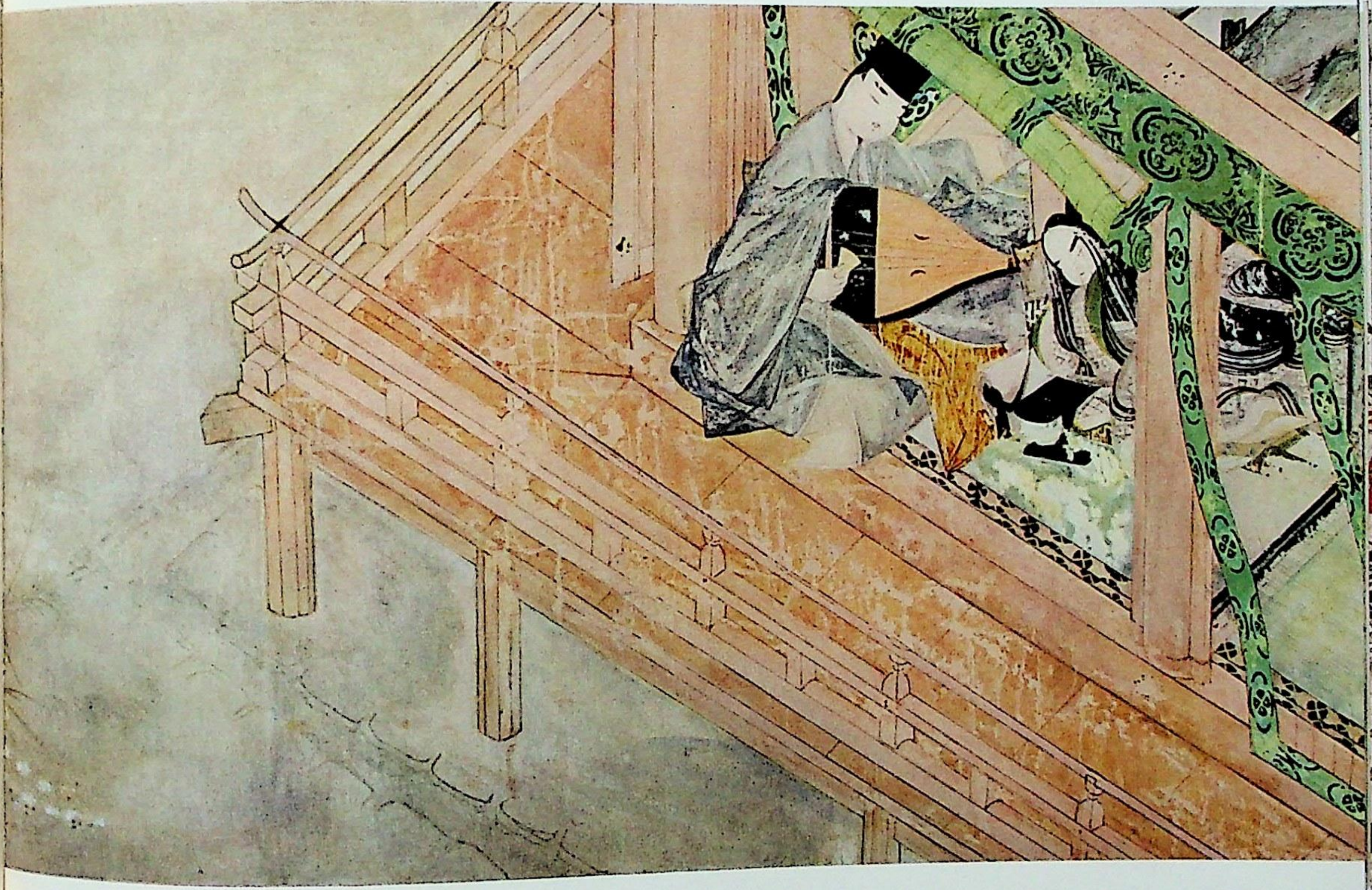
Jigoku Zoshi

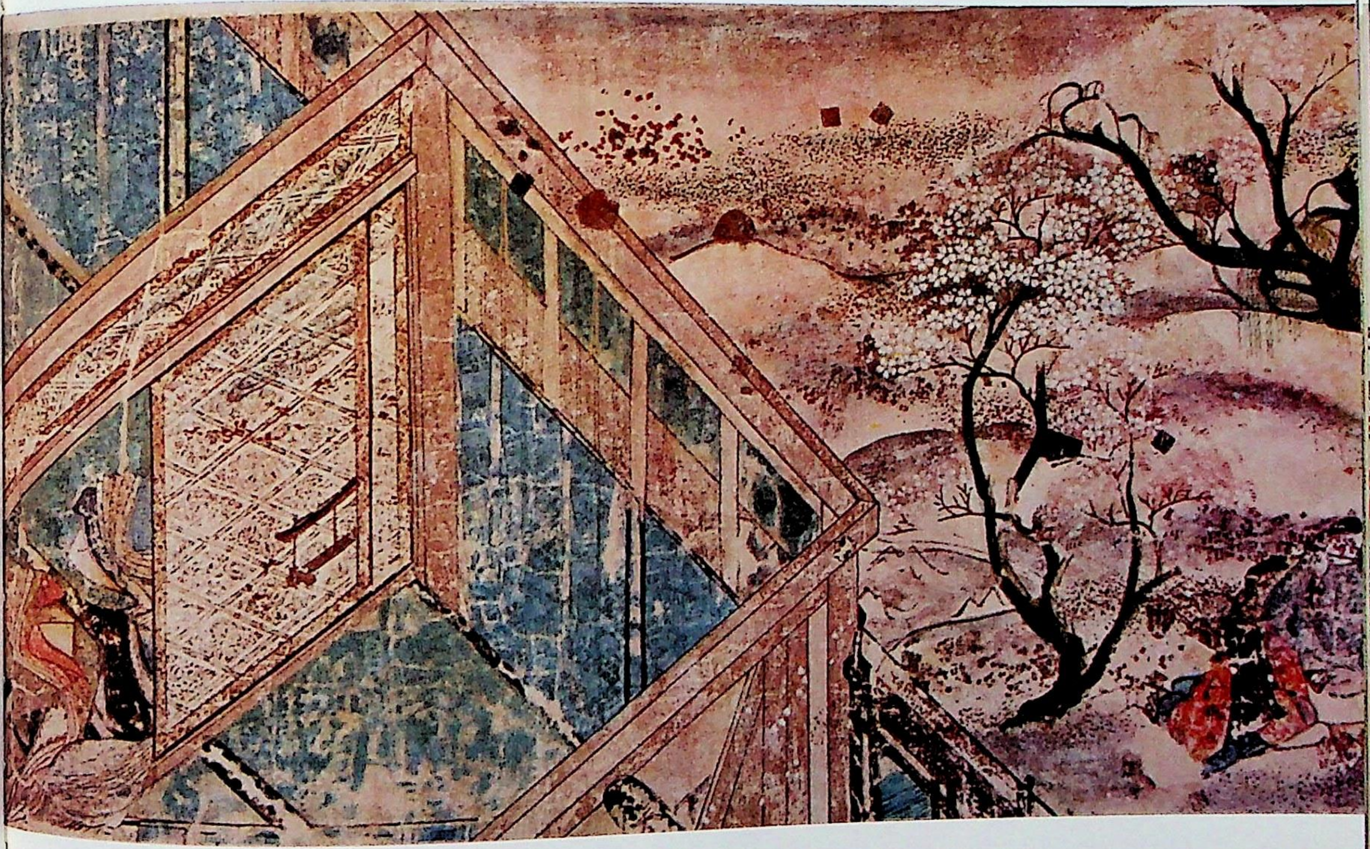
a) Owned by Commission for Protection of Cultural Properties (formerly in Hara Coll.)
b) National Museum, Tokyo (formerly in Anju-in)
c) Others in private collections

XII Century. National Treasure.
Color on paper. Height 10.7in. (26.66cm)

The wars and chaos of the late Heian-early Kamakura period turned the minds of men toward the Buddhist ideas of retribution and reincarnation, with the wheel of life turning for better or for worse, according to one's deserts. The Six States of Existence, already mentioned in the description of the Scroll of the Hungry Ghosts (Plate 9), are shown in another aspect through a series of scrolls picturing the different types of hell.

Pale color washes are added where needed, as in the towering flames that fill Plate 28, but the prime vehicle is a vigorous line. Mystic fears of the next world and only too actual sufferings in the present have stimulated a macabre imagination to the most fantastic and often hideous scenes of tortures. Yet the impression of the whole is not repulsive, but rather tragically impressive in a Dantesque grandeur. At this late moment, when Buddhist fervor was beginning to run low in Japan, there was a last flare-up of spiritual intensity comparable to the fervor that produced the devout icons of the Nara Period.





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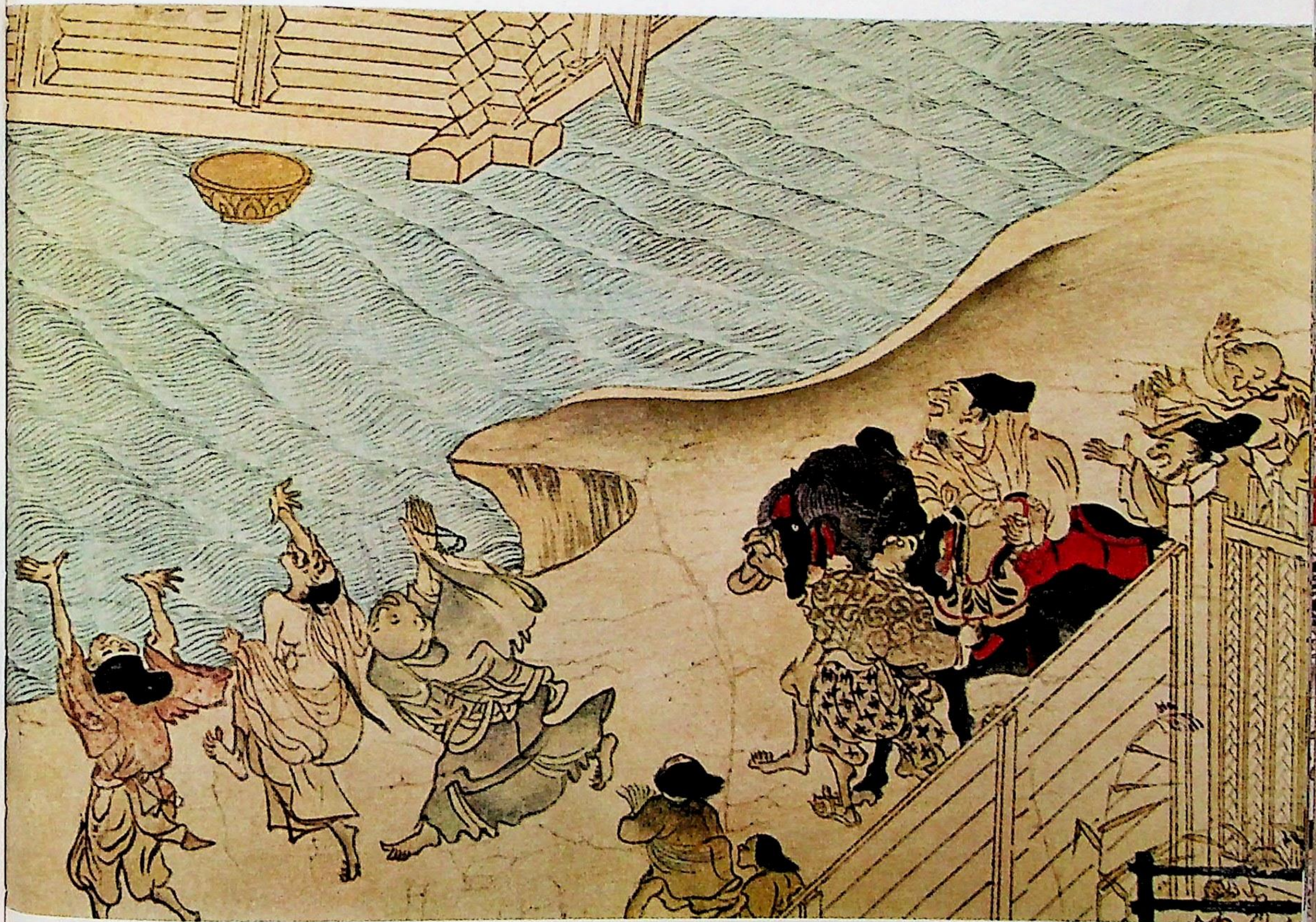

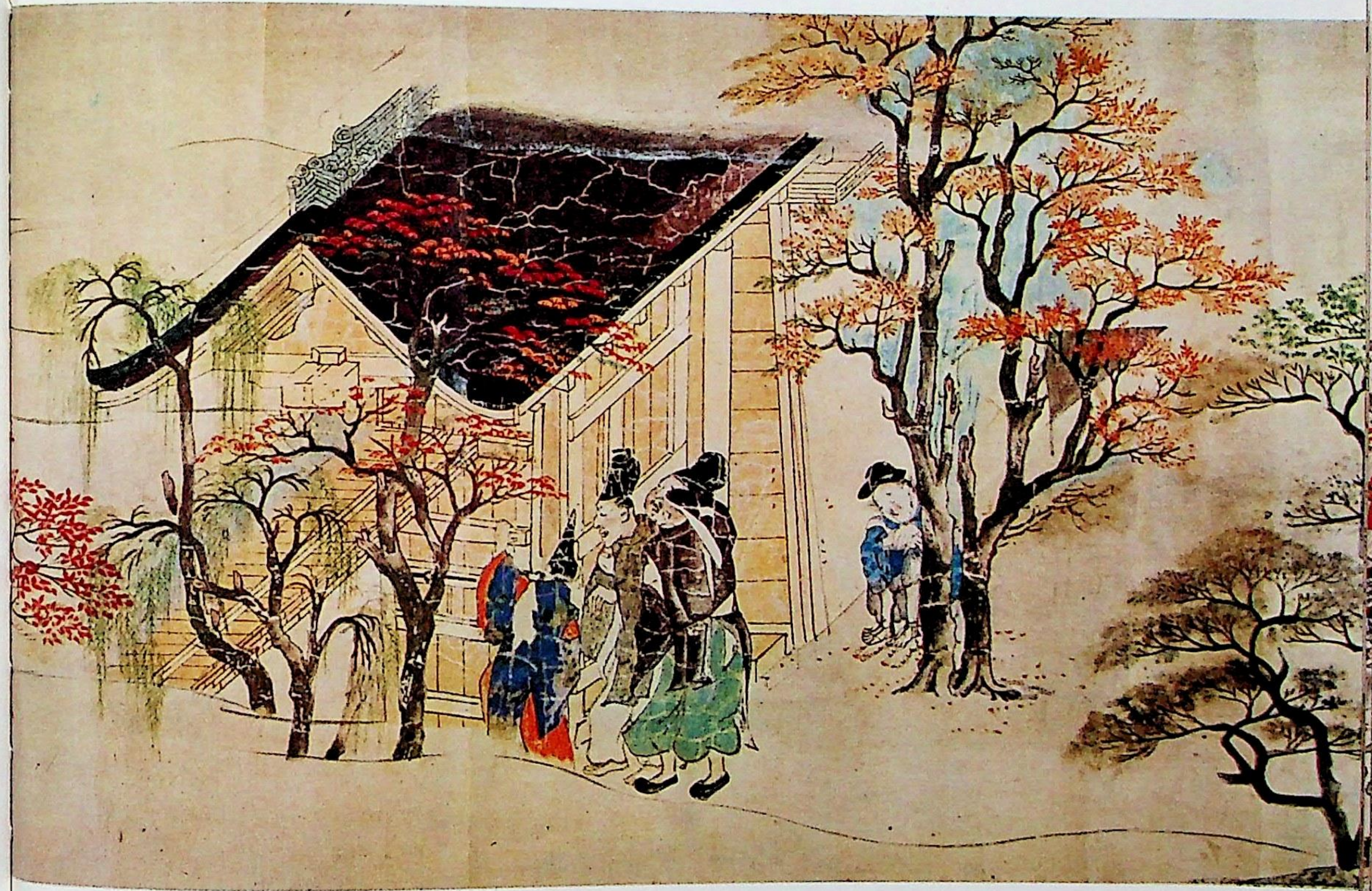

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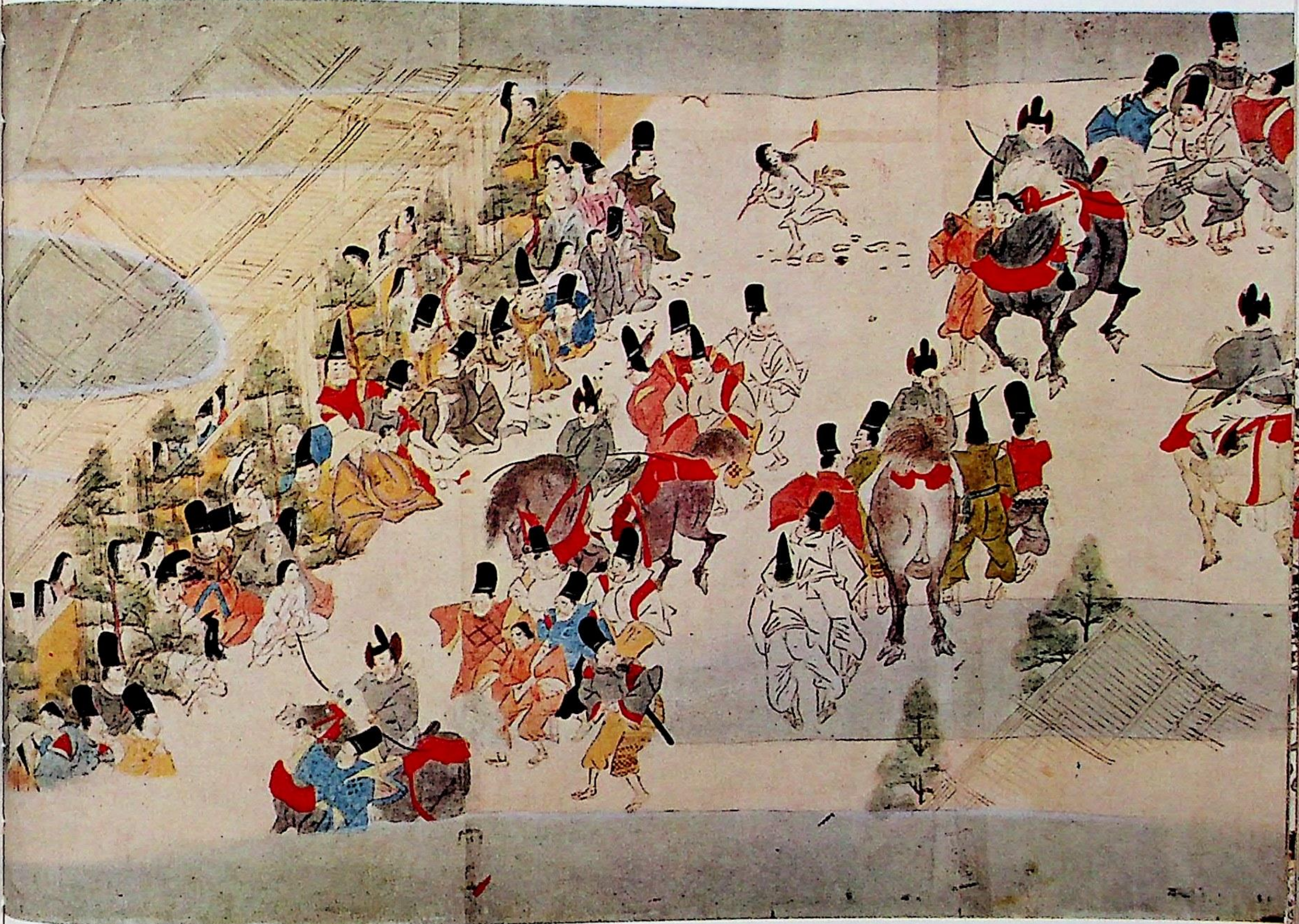

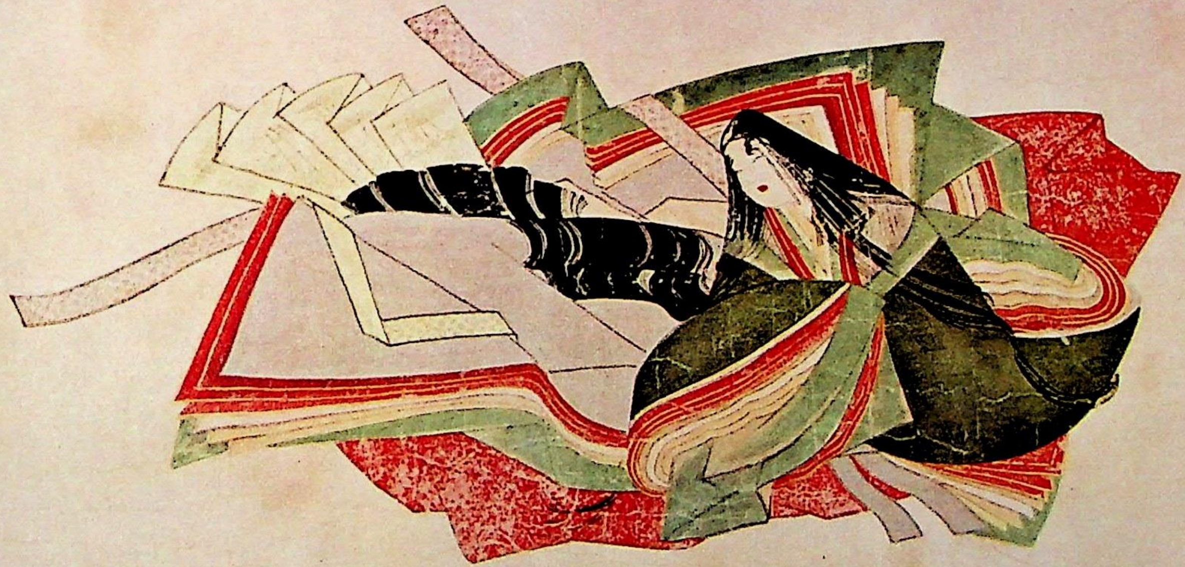

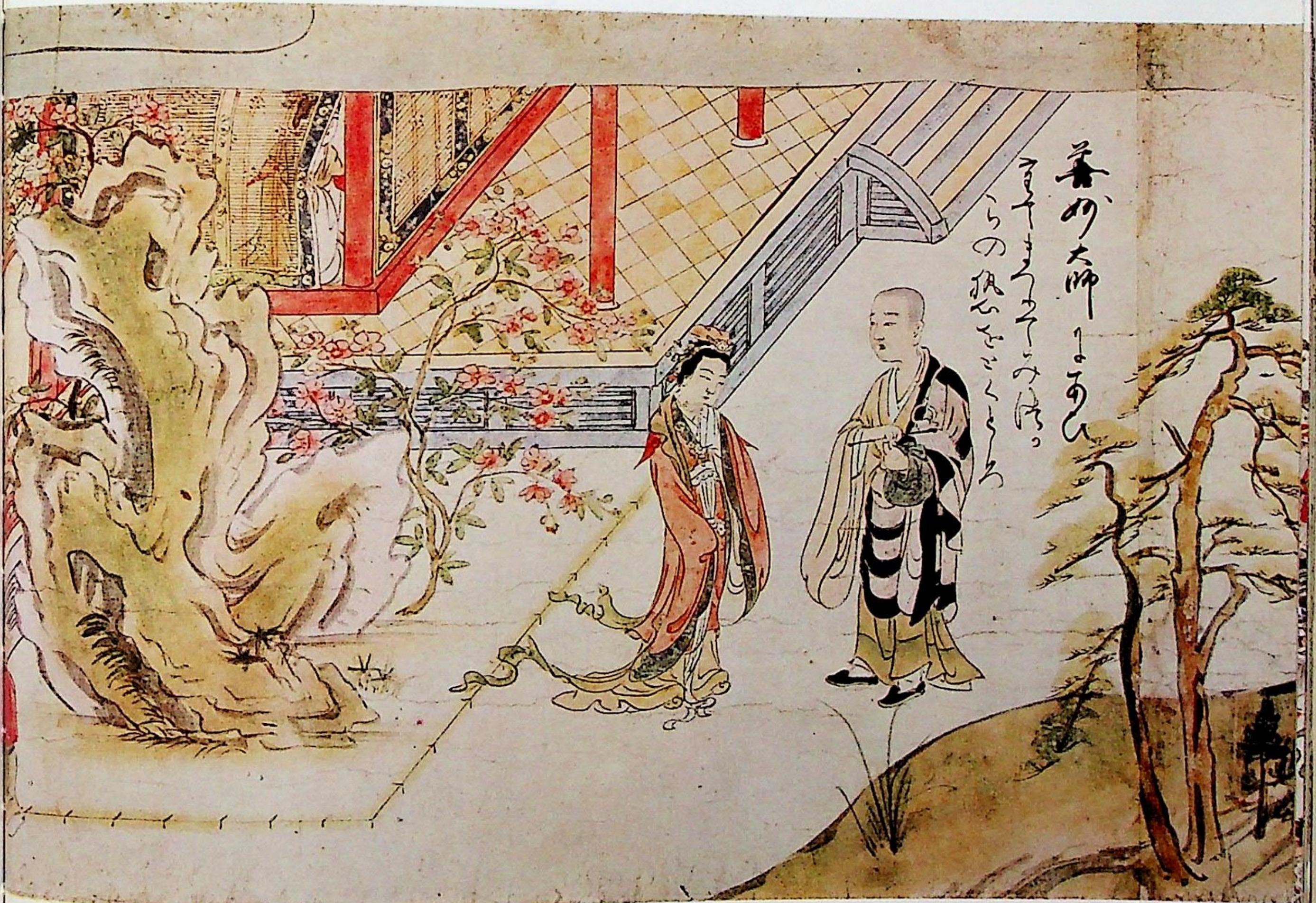
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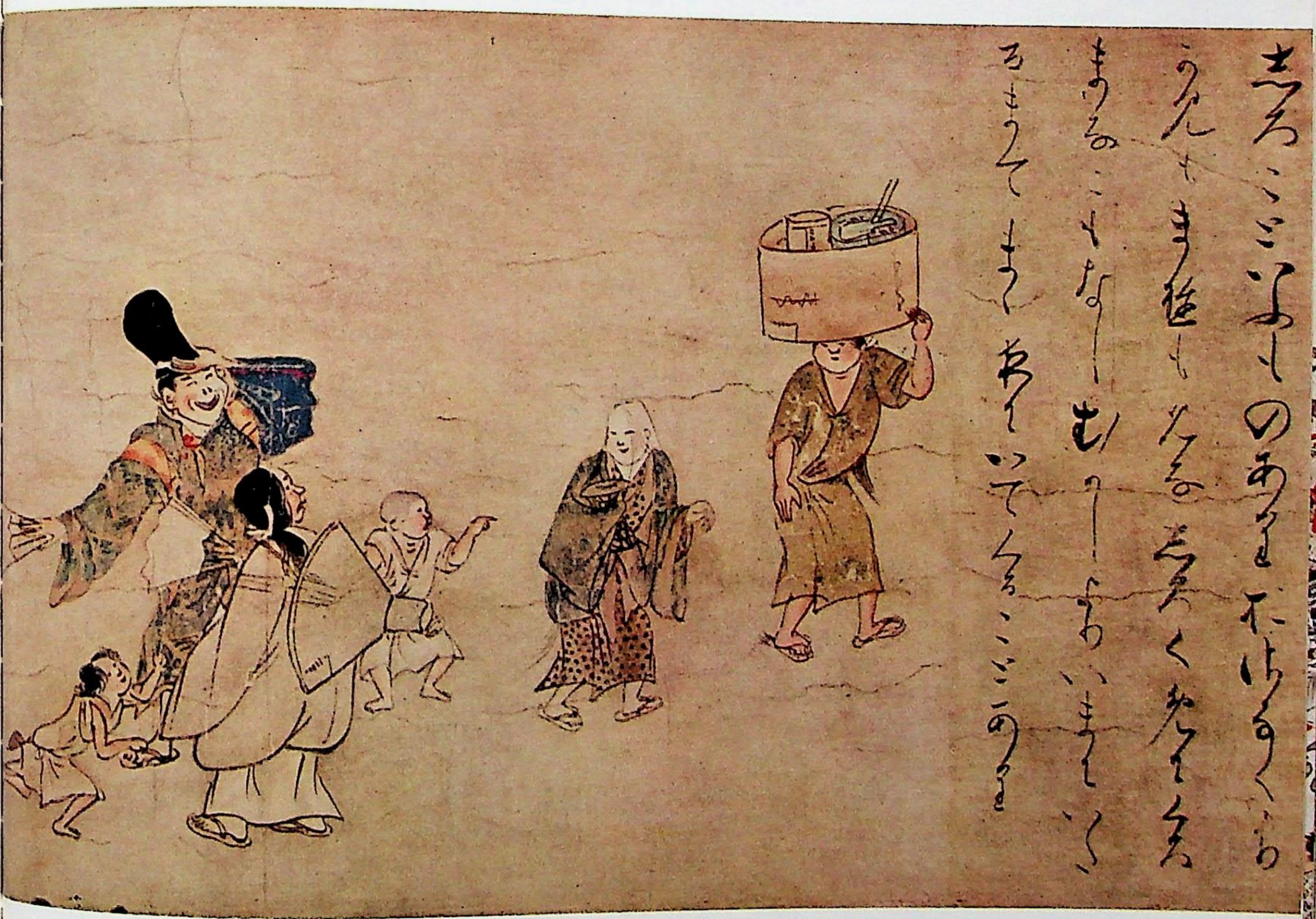

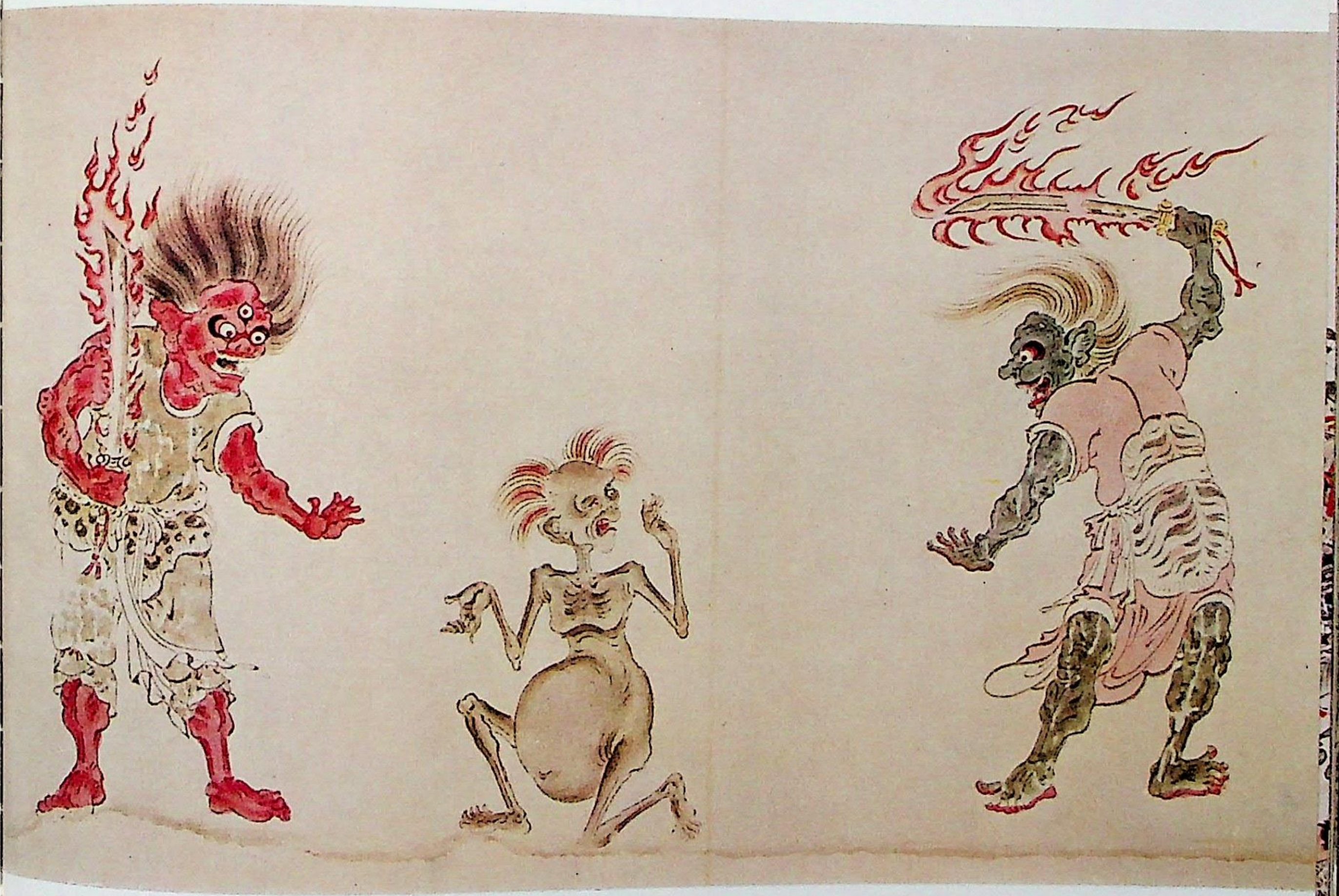

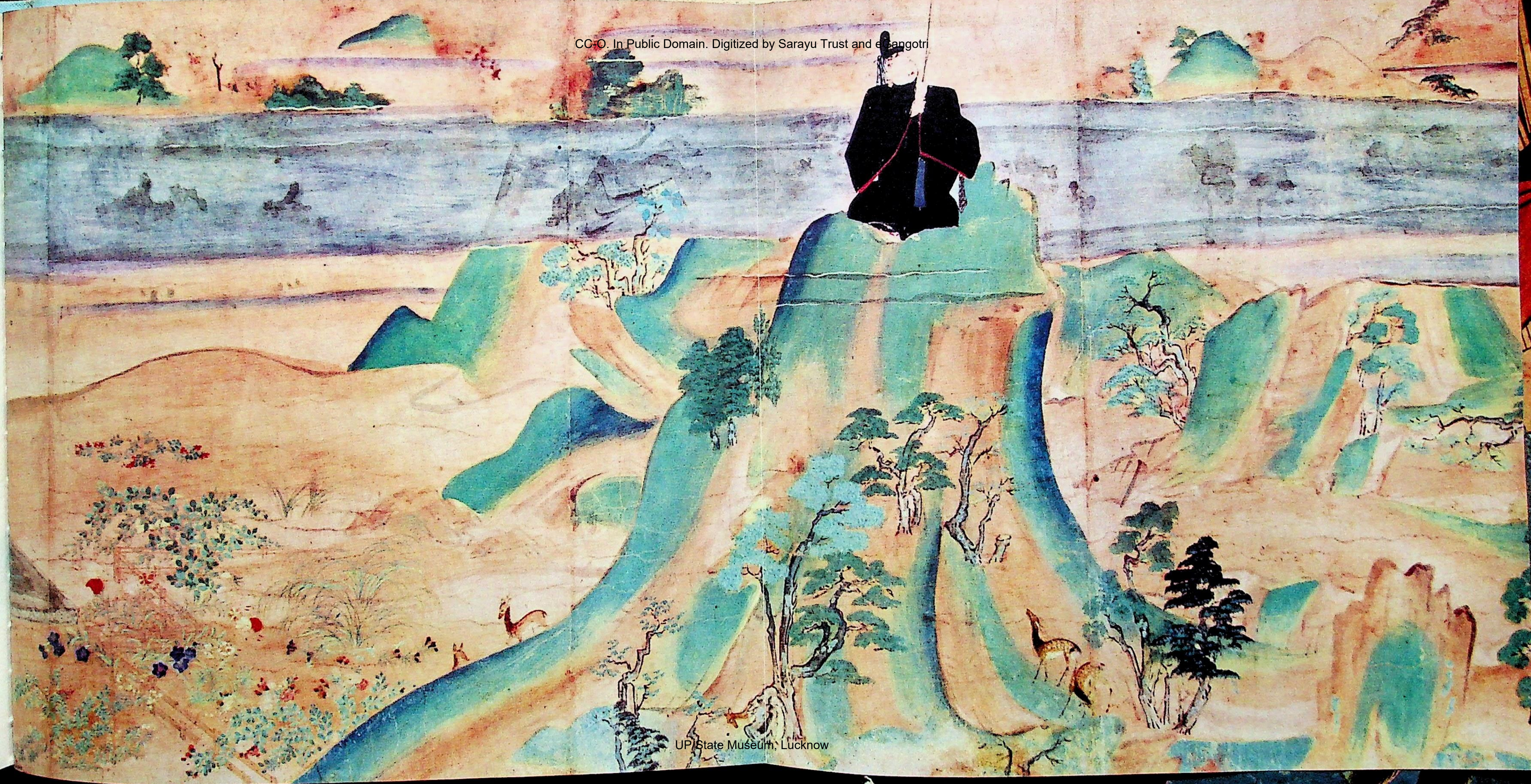

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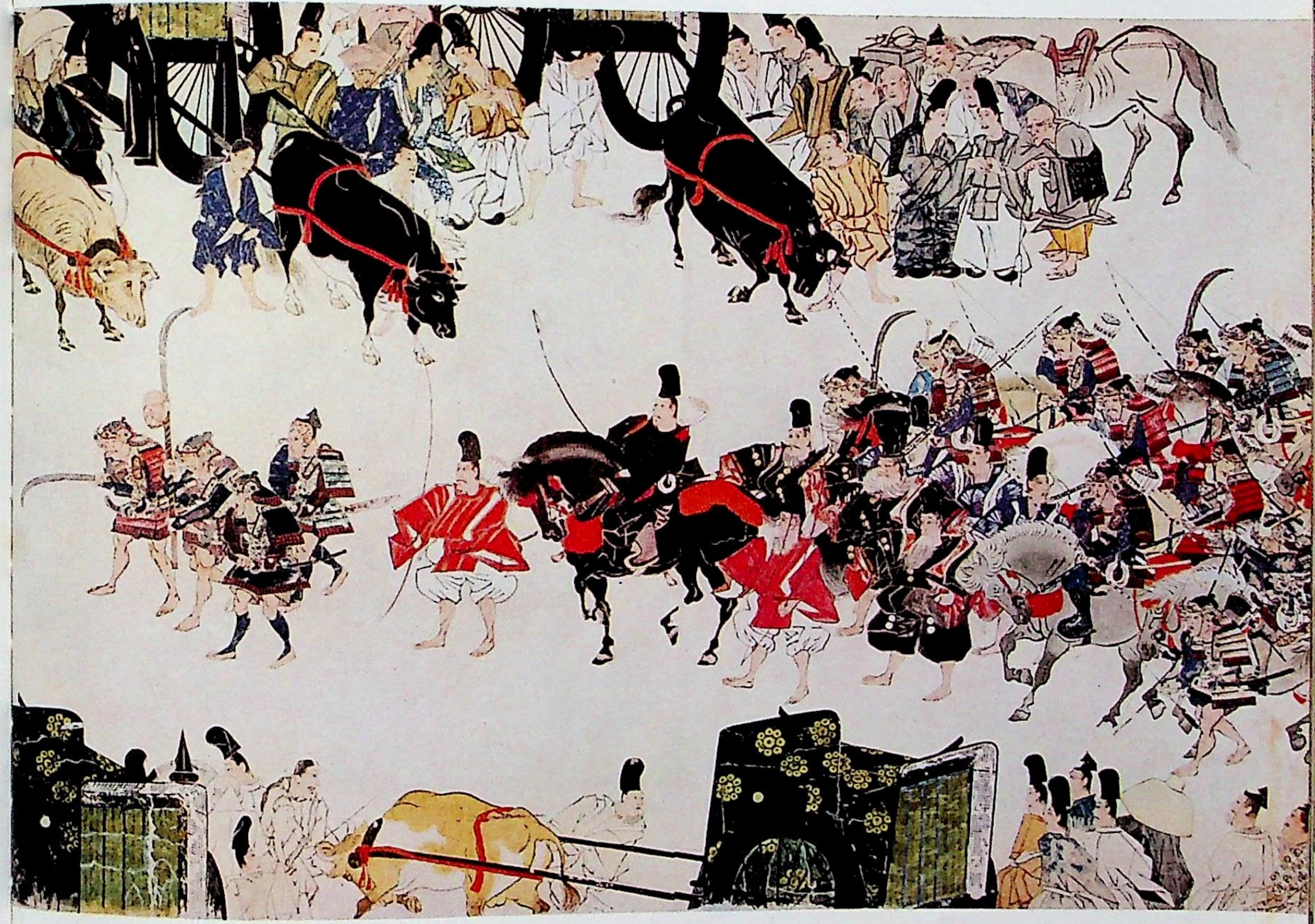

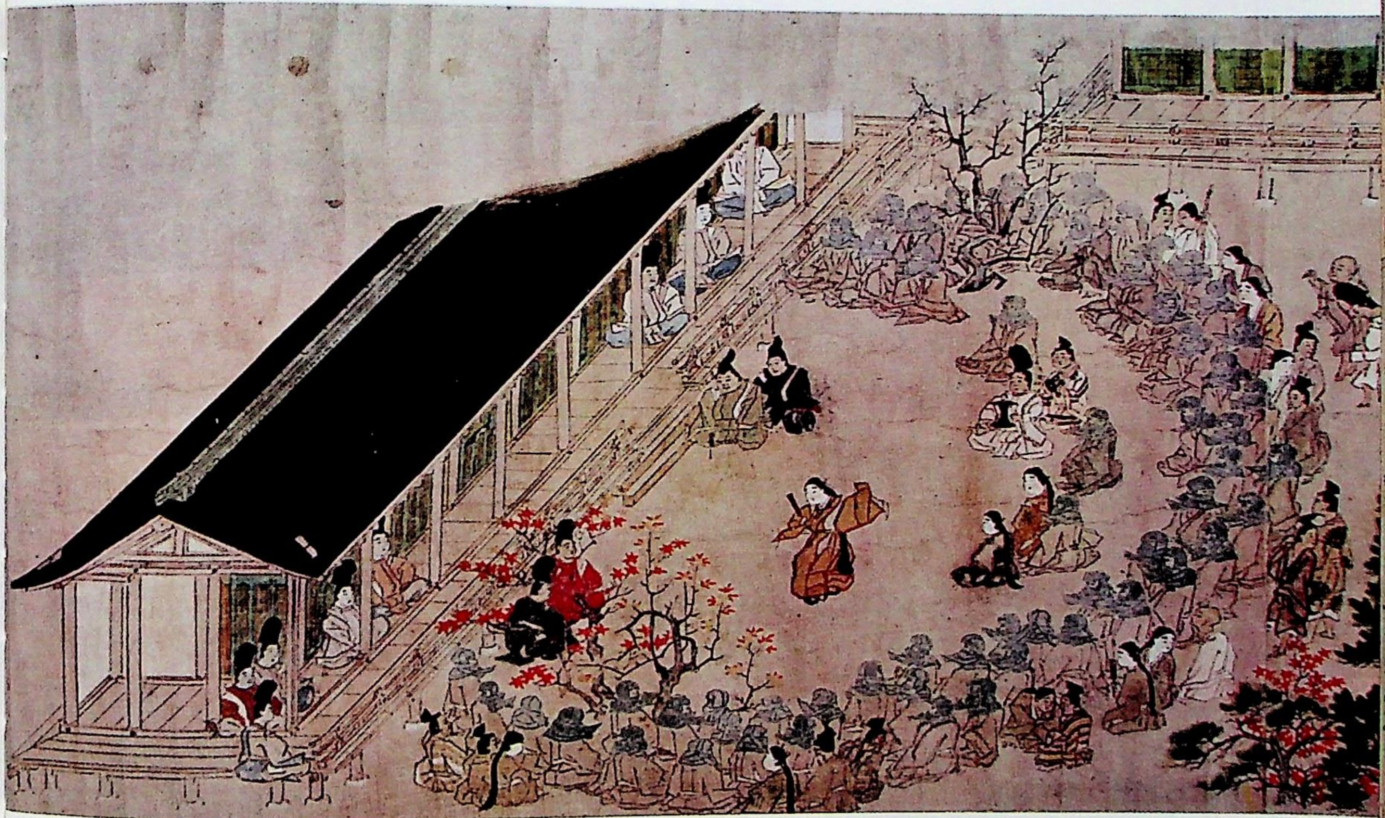

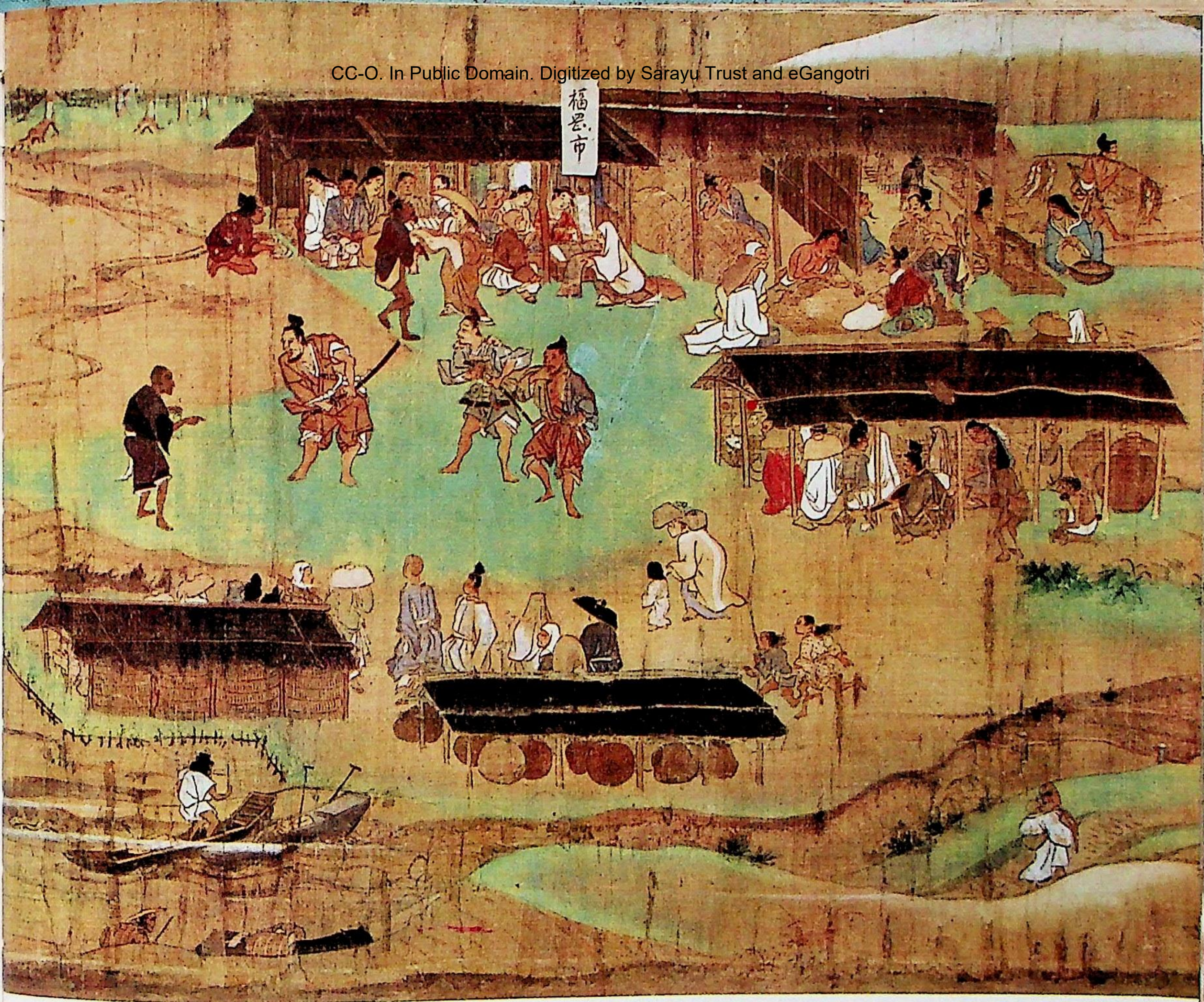
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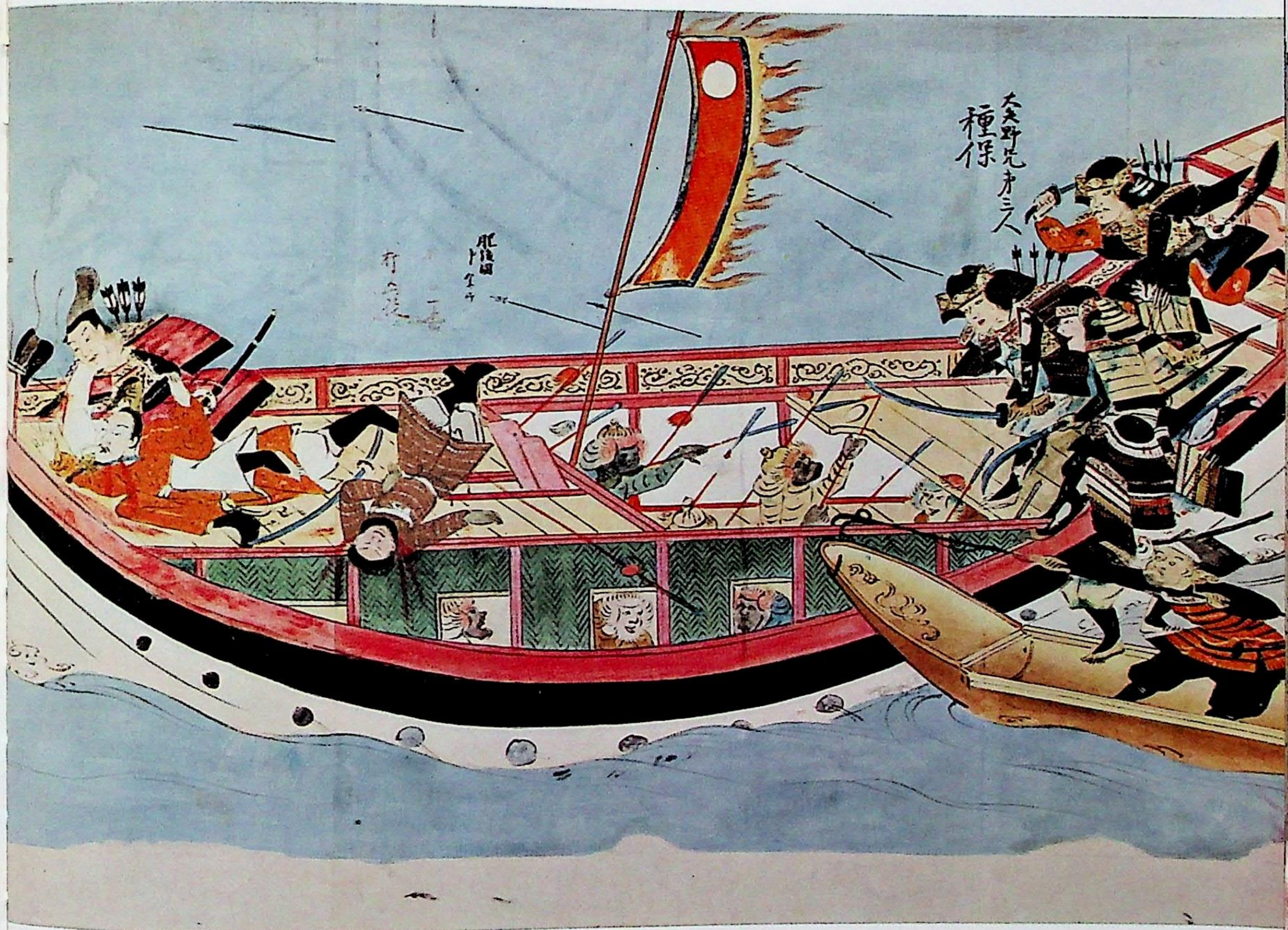
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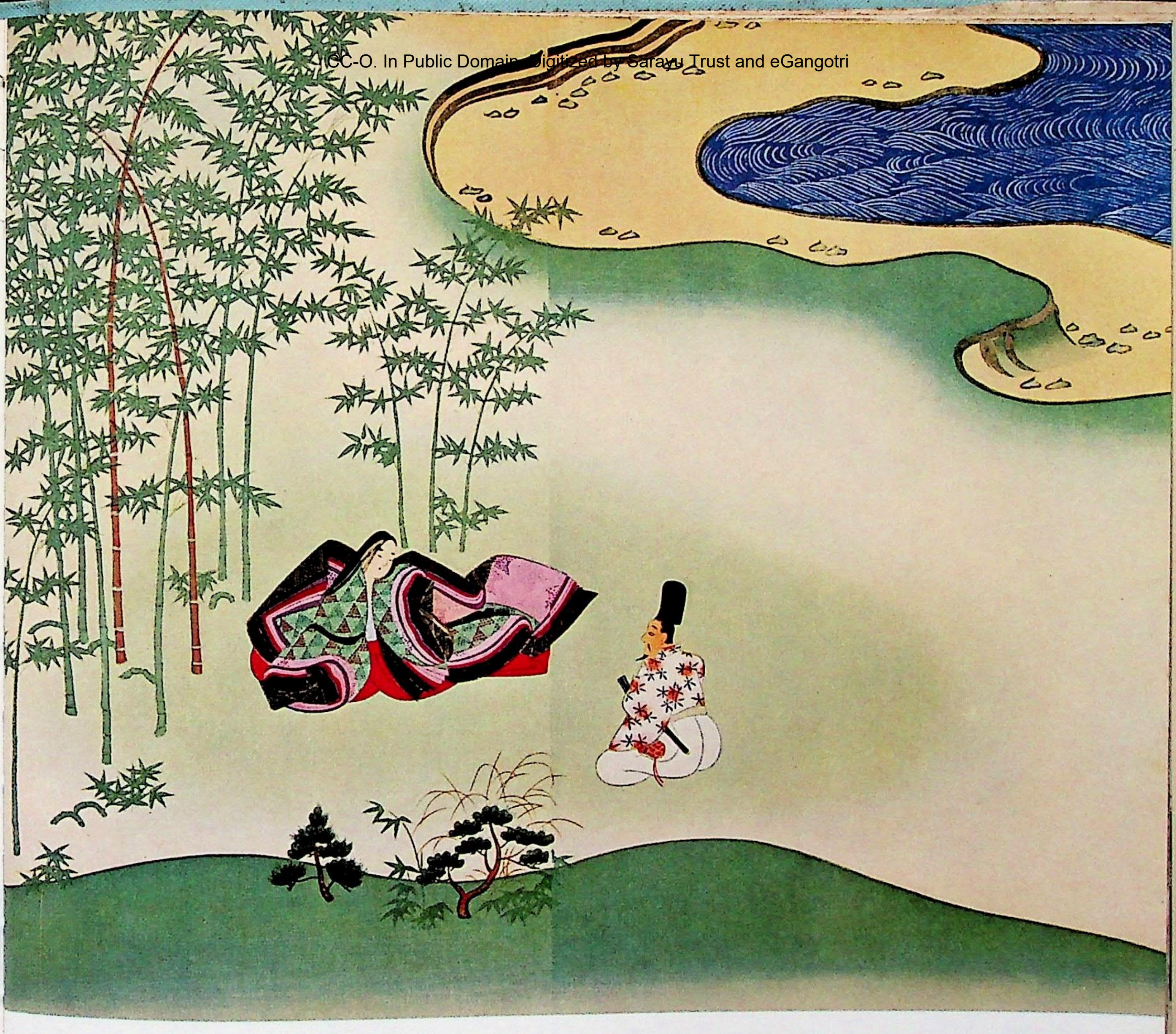
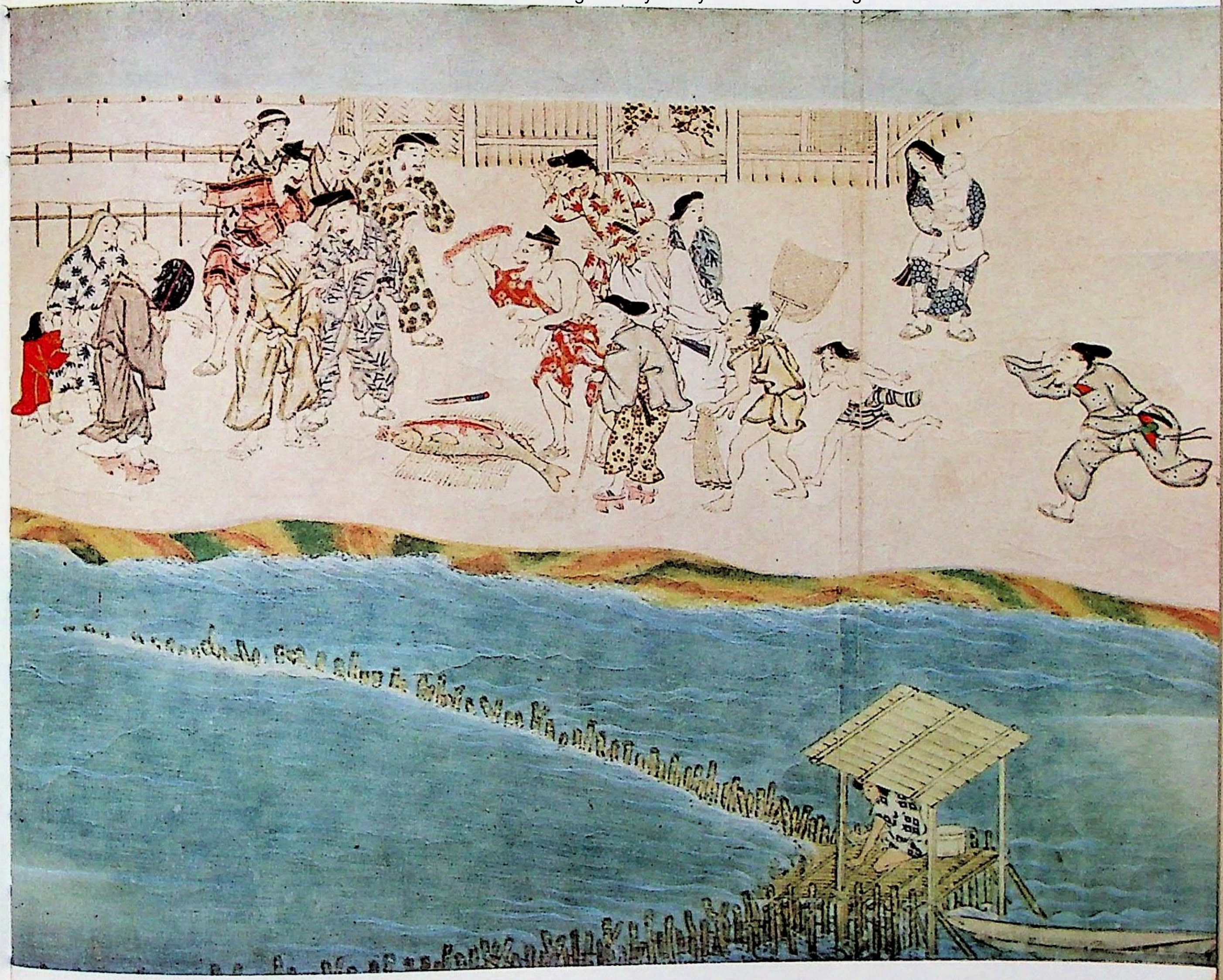
種保
肥後国





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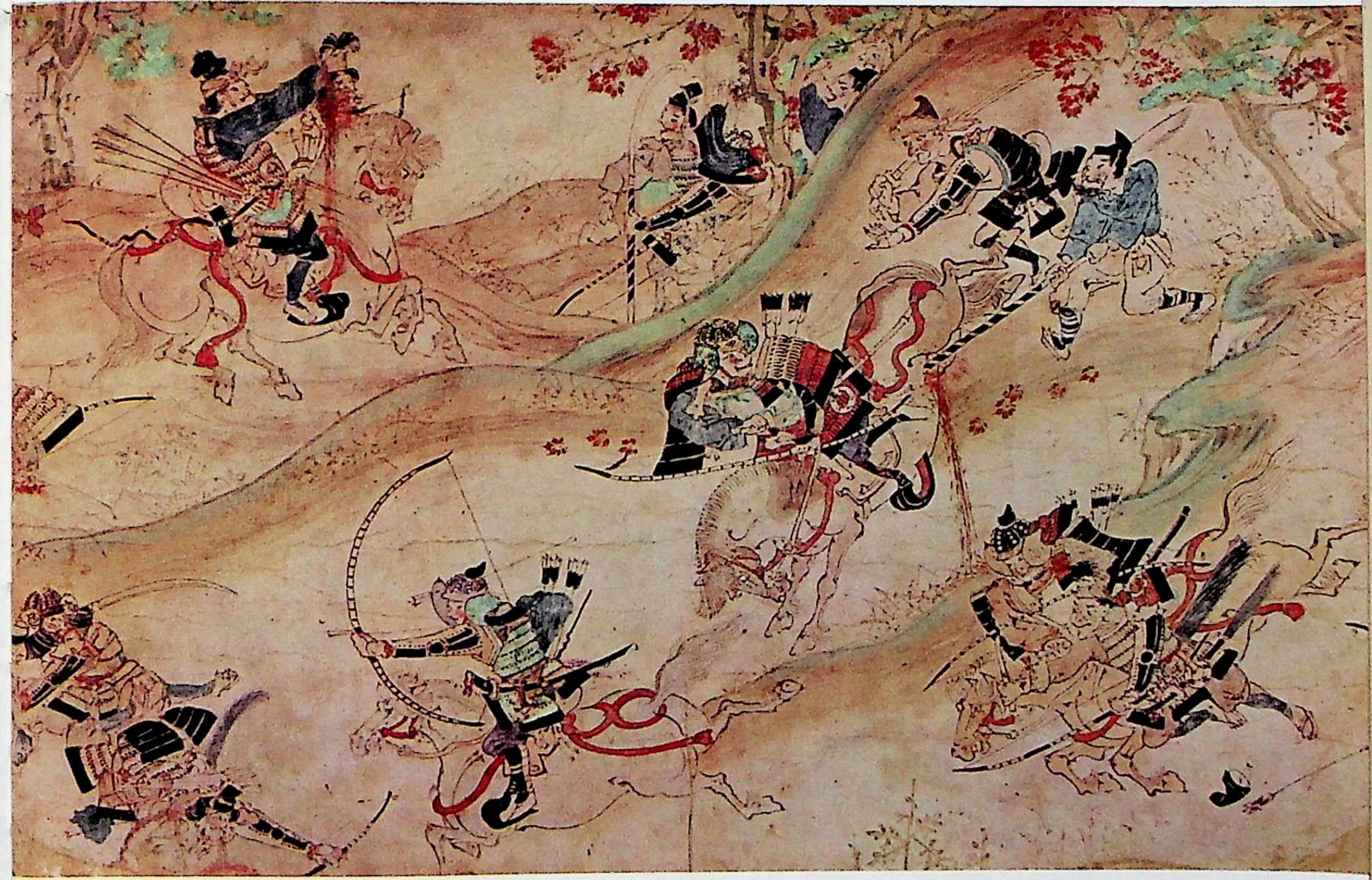

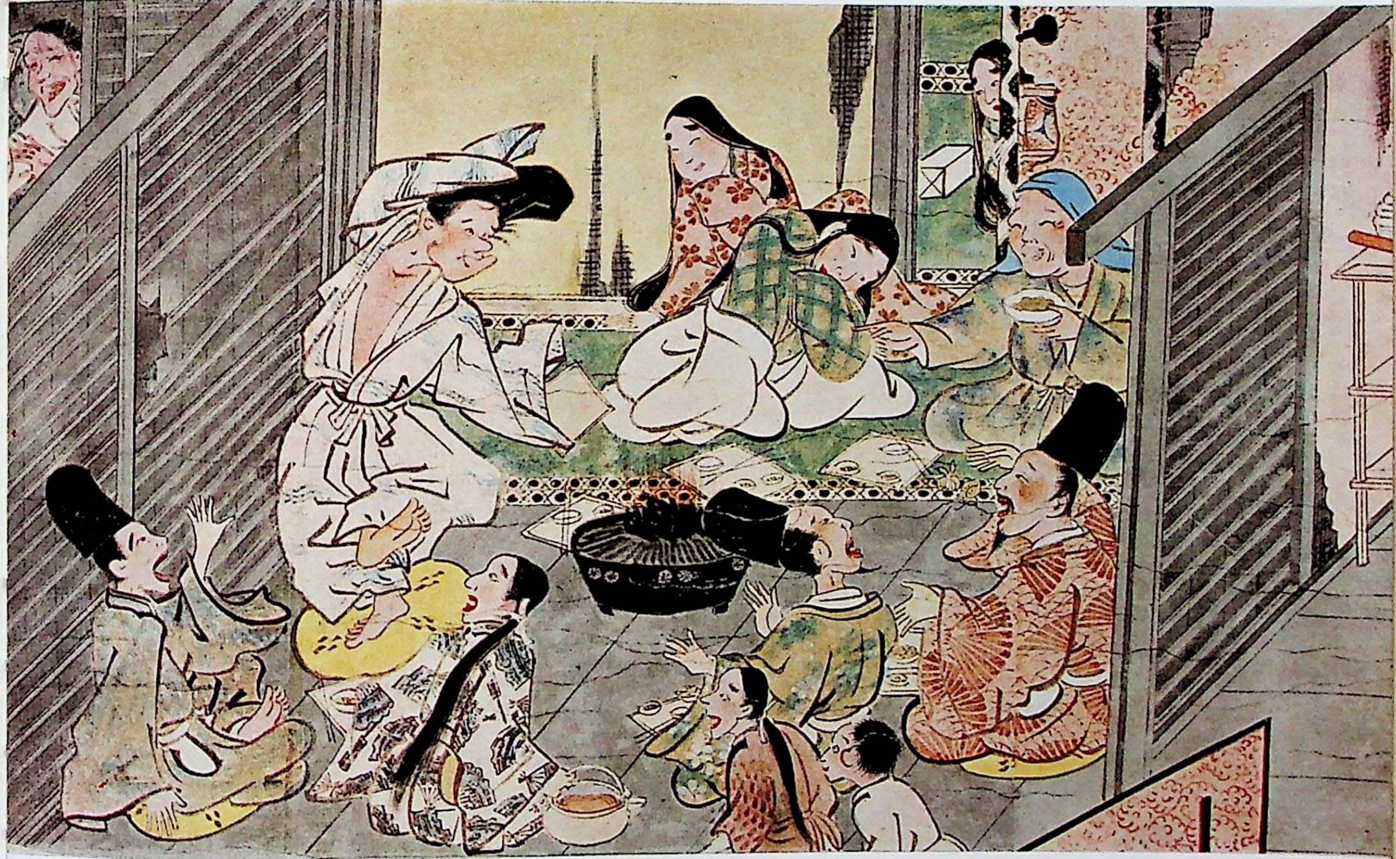

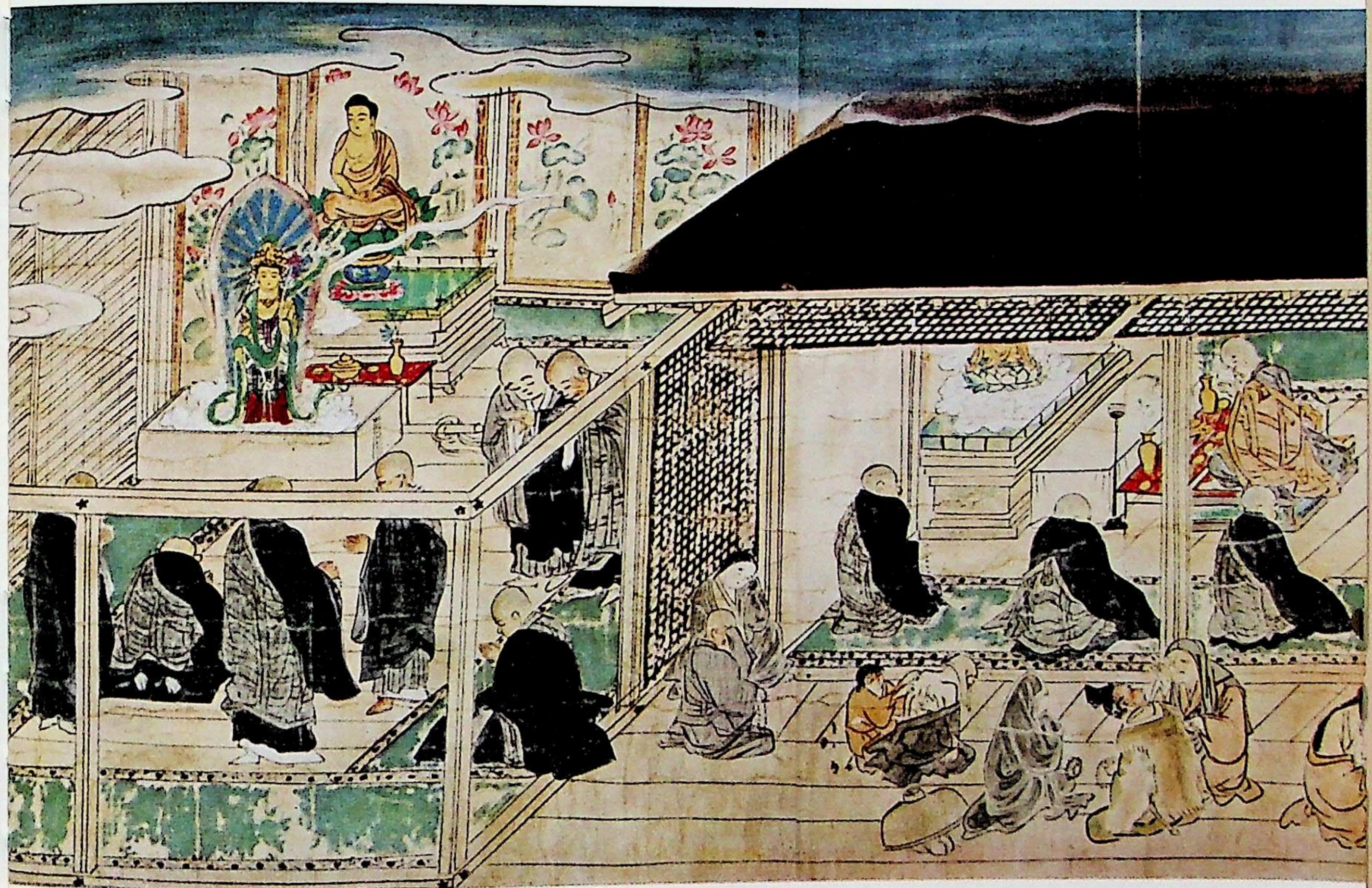

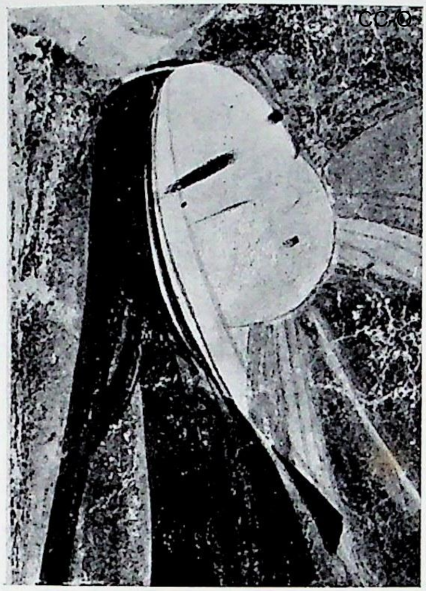

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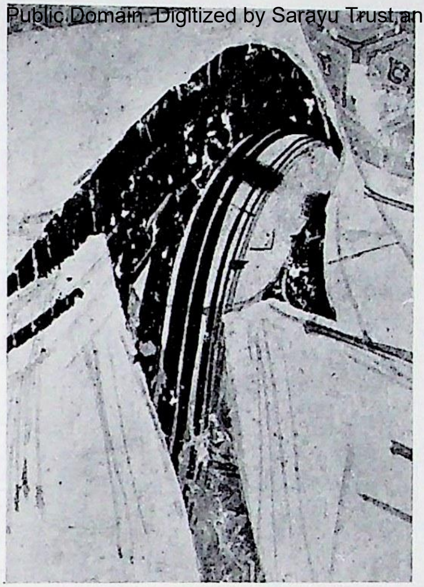

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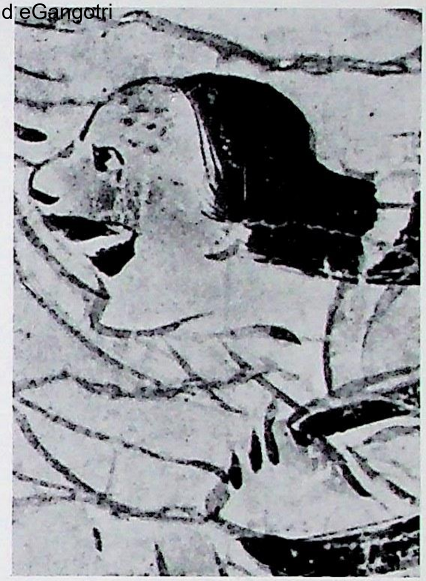

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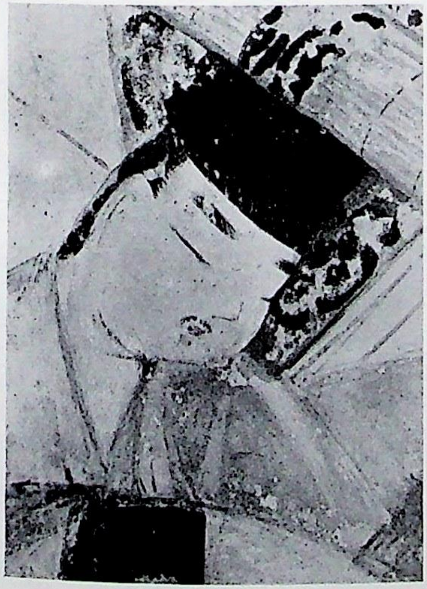

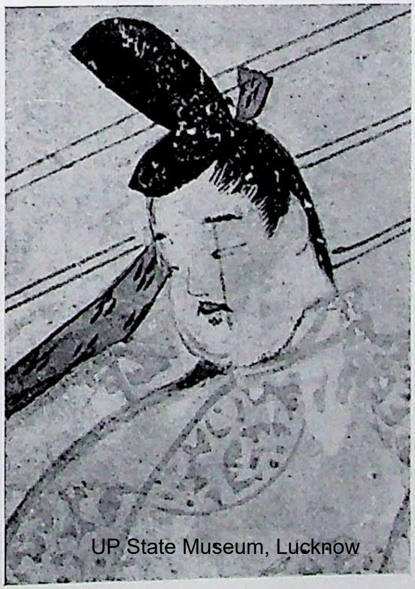

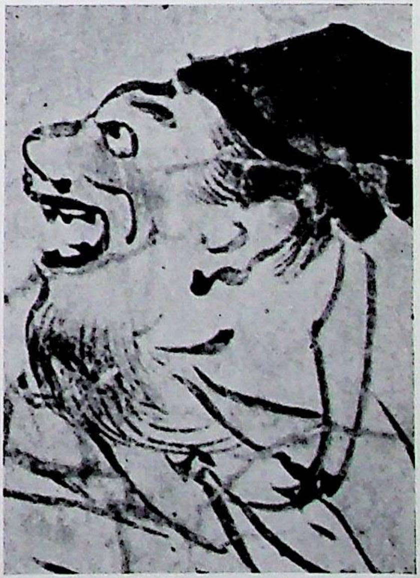

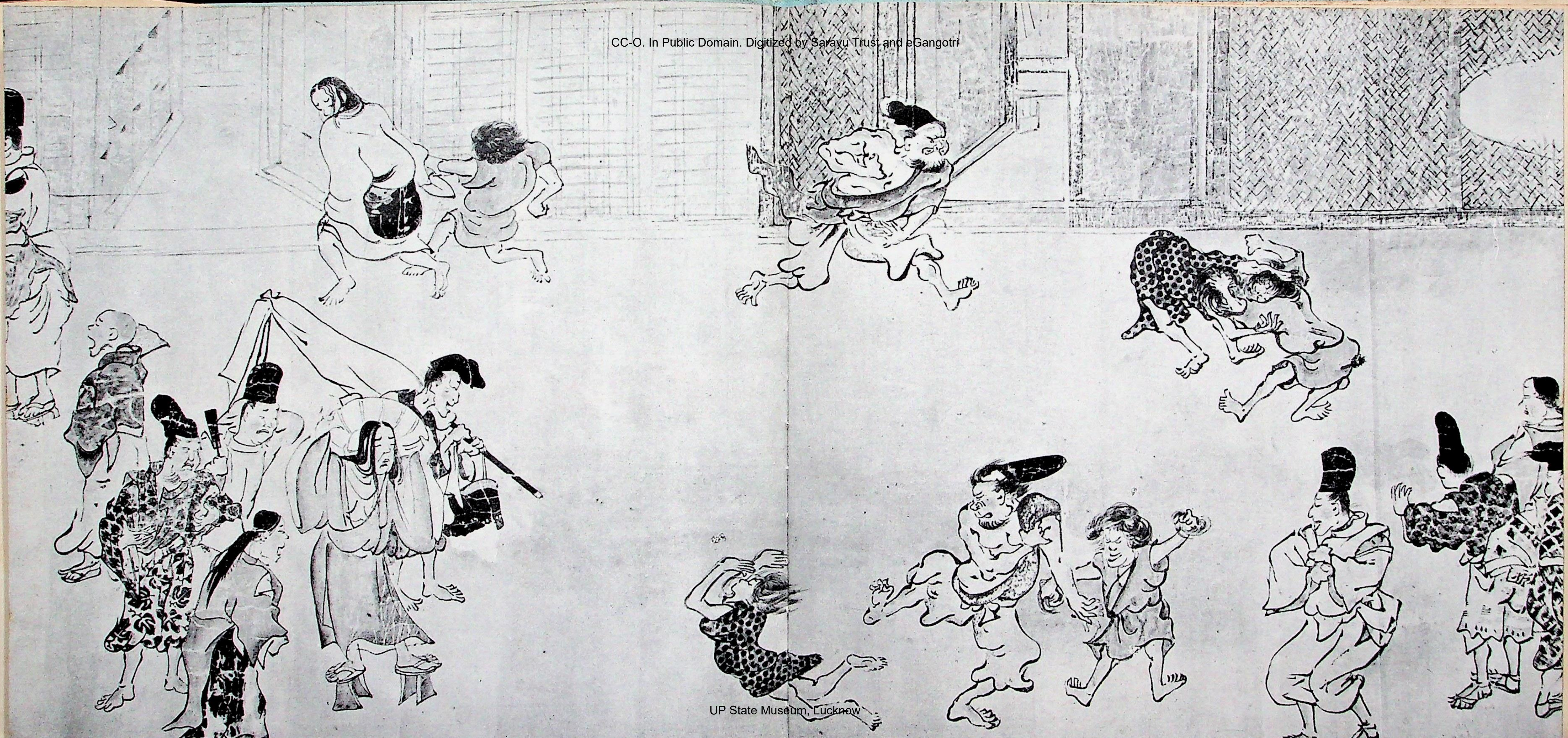

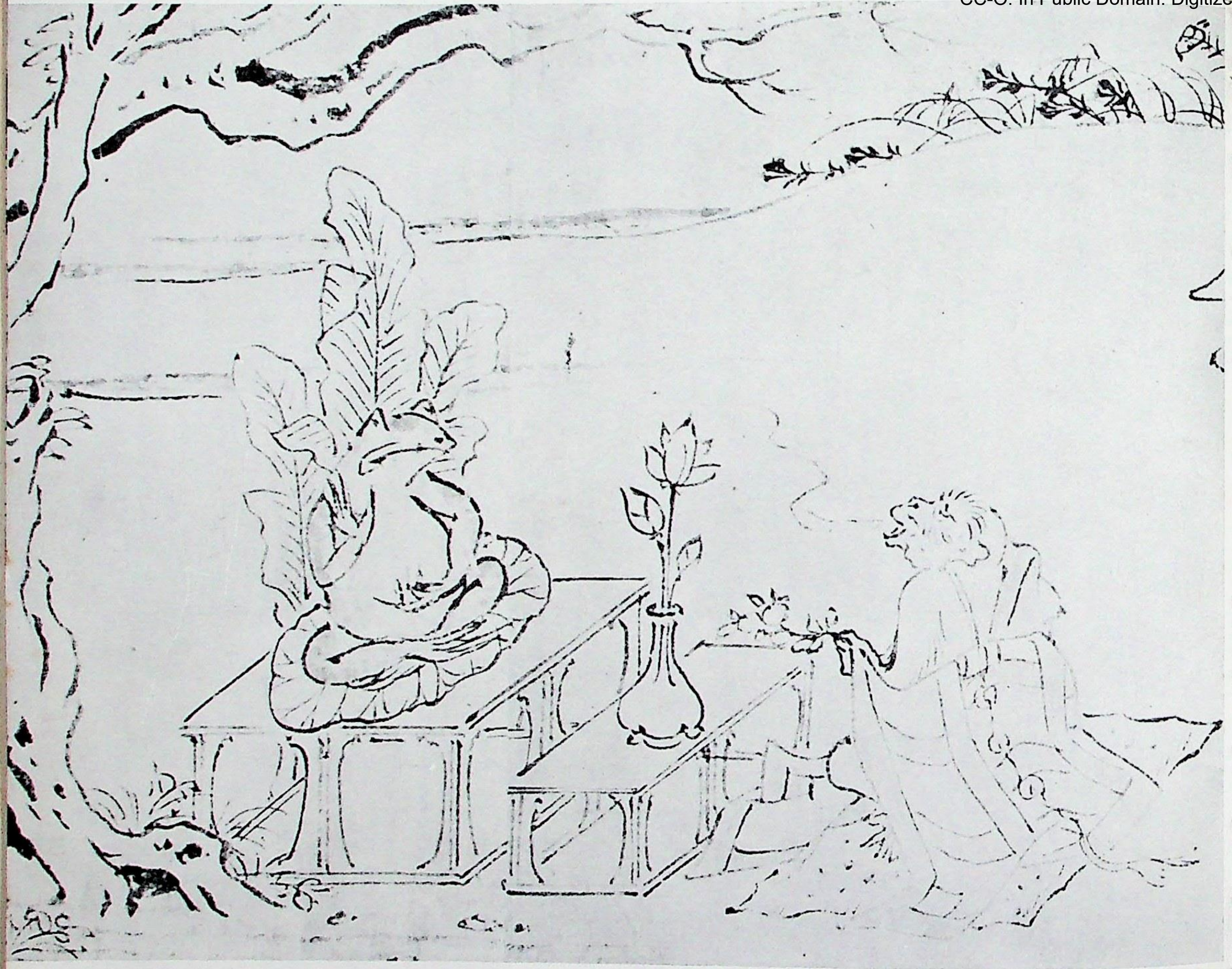

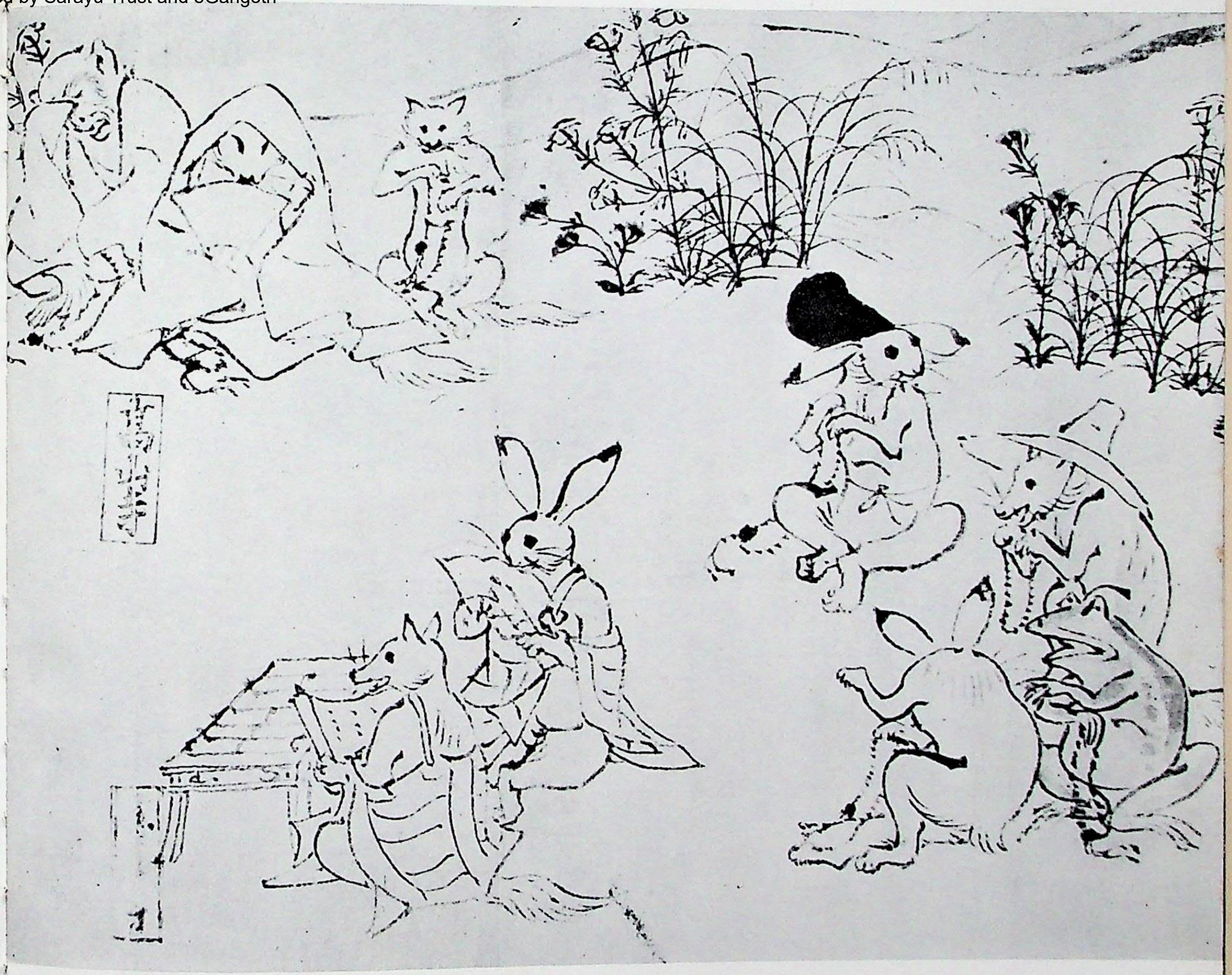

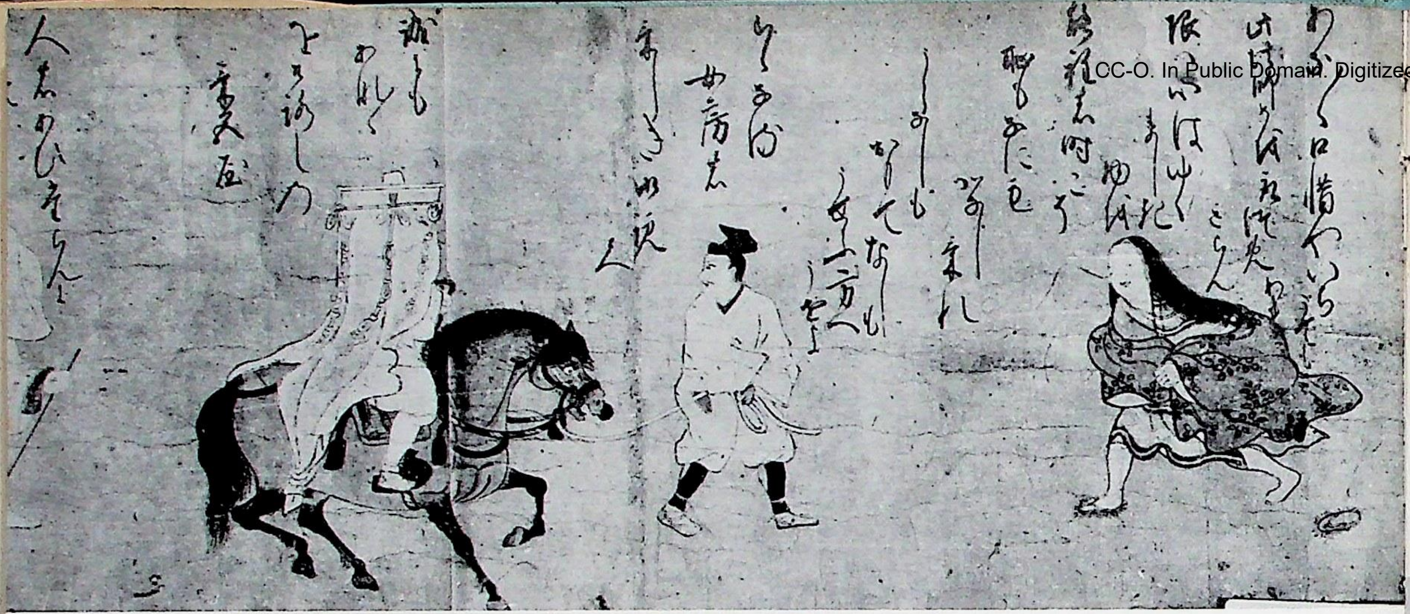

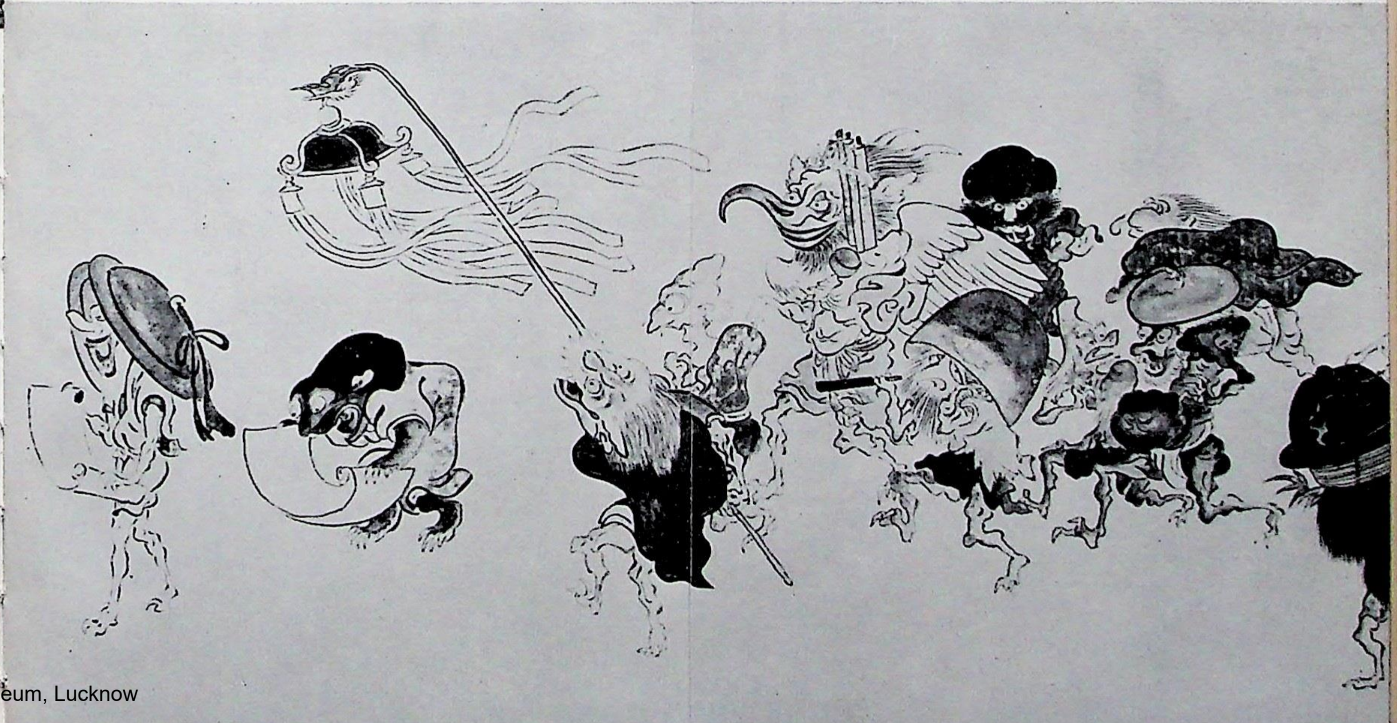

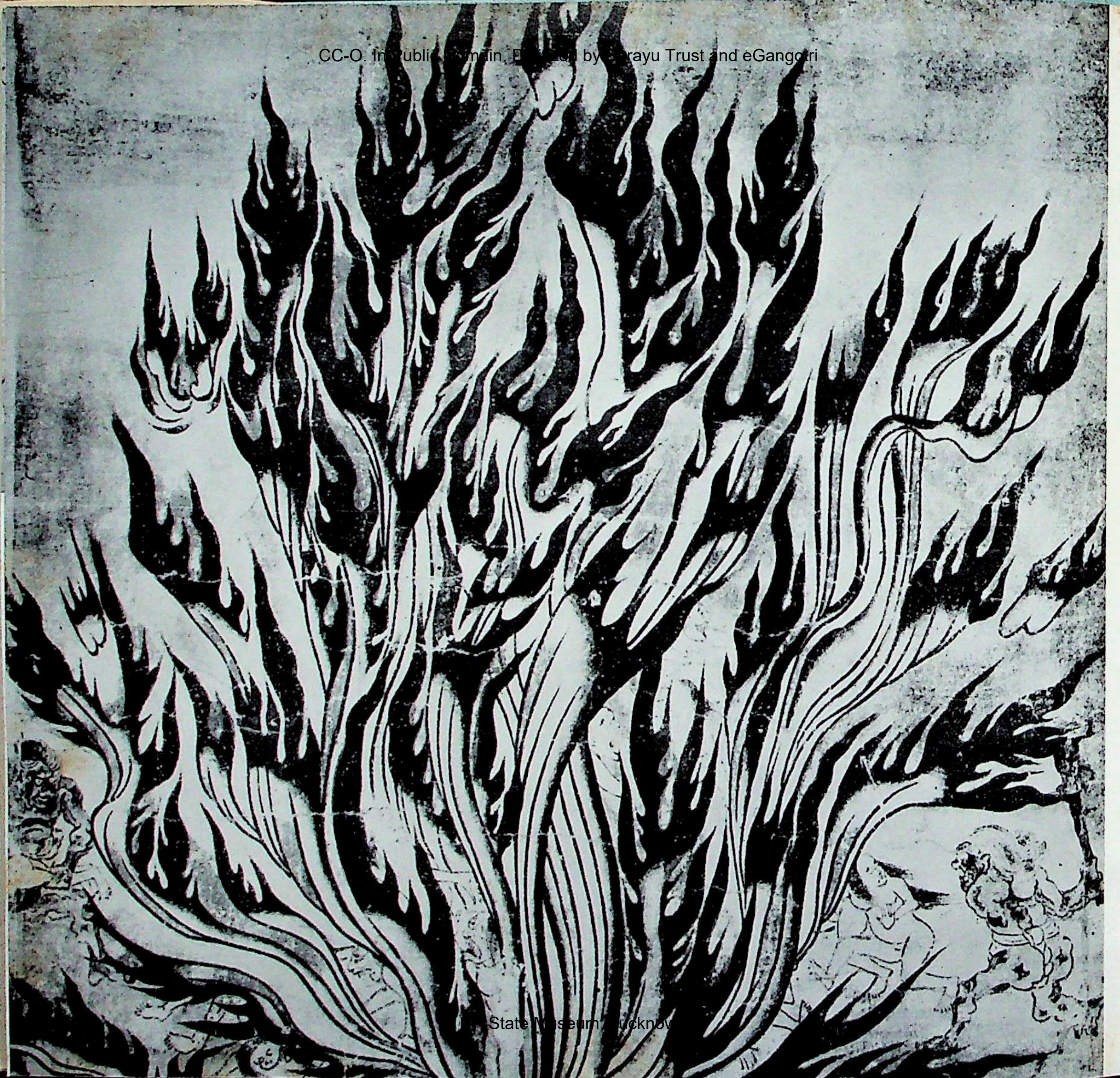

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